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ROAD MAP

Quail-bound and down: A rough-and-tumble Austin-Healey 100-6 towing a pair of Matchless G80s, en route to The Quail Motorcycle Gathering. Page 40.



SETH DEBOES

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ON THE WEB!

On track

Ad man Shane Powers and his Honda CB350 the "Sea Beast" made it to the track. A few hours of safety wiring and final prep finished things up as he readied for AHRMA tech inspection on Friday morning, which took place just before race school. It was a wild and wooly weekend at Heartland Motorsports Park in Topeka, Kansas. Read all about it at MotorcycleClassics.com/AHRMA-CB350-Part-6



A classic men's leather jacket by Joe Rocket

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The bike made me do it

I'm going to go out on a limb here, but I've met a lot of motorcyclists in my life, and I bet 75 percent of you would agree with me on this: Motorcycles can speak to you.

Some days they audibly speak: they misfire, they squeak, they squeal, or when things go really wrong, they grind, growl or just go bang. But that's not what I mean. I'm talking about the way sometimes a motorcycle tells you something. Maybe it doesn't even tell your brain. I think maybe it tells your gut.

The bike says, "Hey man, you need one of these." The last time this happened to me was in July 2016. At our yearly MC Ride 'Em, Don't Hide 'Em event in Pennsylvania, we'd finished up our Sunday Morning Ride, the last of the official events for the weekend. After we helped attendees pack up and get their bikes loaded, we decided it was time for lunch.

This was to be the inaugural unofficial lunch ride. All weekend we had been riding a selection of vintage twins brought to the event by Joel Samick of RetroTours (retrotours.com). I'd spent most of the weekend riding his 1970 Triumph T100C (dutifully named Purple Rain by ad man Shane Powers). Light, agile, simple and almost quaint, it did the job and got me around all weekend.

But the hard part was over. No more leading a group or trying to figure out

where I was going. Get on a bike, follow editor Backus and see where we can find some grub. (We wound up at See-Mor's All Star Grill in Normalville, Pennsylvania. We now try to go every year!) We all swapped bikes for the lunch ride. Joel had also brought his 1973 Norton Commando Fastback 750 for us to use (that's me with the 750 below). I'd pulled the Norton out Friday night to start it and run it around the parking lot. I was taught the kickstarting ritual by none other than Brian Slark (!) who was our guest of honor that year.

Riding the Triumph all weekend had me trained on shifting on the right, so I had that down, but the Norton had an upside-down shift pattern to boot. Yep, one up, three down. Don't mis-shift!

A few miles into our ride, we got to a clear, open two-lane road and everyone picked up the pace. It was time to see what full throttle sounded like. I opened it wide, nailed the shift from second to third and opened that throttle again. And that's when I heard it.

Right in the gut.

That bike told me one thing, clear as day and louder than the glorious growl from those open mufflers:

"You need one of these."

Apparently I was too busy listening to the bike rather than keeping up the pace. We soon stopped for fuel, and Powers said something to the effect of "Hey, I thought those things were fast?" My response shouldn't be repeated here. Shane Powers, ballbuster extraordinaire.

Our crew spent lunch talking bikes. Backus knows Commandos inside and out. He knew what was going on here. It was obvious. I think he even said it. "You need one of those." Two months later I had one, but that's a story for another day.

What ride do you remember that led you to buy another old bike? Send me an email at lhall@motorcycleclassics.com. Even better, If you've got a hi-res photo of the bike, send that along too. And next time a bike talks to you, listen.

Cheers,

Landon



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“I rode the wheels off of that machine.”



Bob Kass (left) and Chuck Proulx, ready for adventure in May 1971.

The adventure of a lifetime

Here is a picture of me (on the Yammy) and my good buddy Bob Kass (Captain America) taken in May 1971. In a few weeks we took off on a summer adventure of a lifetime. Leaving our homes in Michigan, we traveled west across Canada, south on the Pacific Coast Highway and finally east on Route 66 towards home, nearly 8,000 miles and more than eight weeks in the saddle. I still ride and enjoy your magazine. I currently have a 1972 Yamaha XS650 and a Ducati Scrambler. Thanks for a great magazine.

Chuck Proulx/via email

Chuck,

What a road trip that must have been. Thanks for sharing the memories! — Ed.

Triumphs gone, but not forgotten

I am a longtime subscriber to *Motorcycle Classics*. I currently ride a 2017 Triumph Bobber and I really dig the torque of that engine! I have had many bikes over the last 43 years, including a Yamaha Radian which I really liked a lot. It was a good looking machine. I also had a 1989 Sporty which fit my 5-foot-7-inch frame just right. Somewhere along the

RIDERS

Rider: Fred Hawley, Middletown, New Jersey

Age: 69

Occupation: Electrical engineer

Rides: 1966 Honda CL77, 1978 Honda CB550, 1975 Honda CB750, 1975 Yamaha XS650, 1981 Yamaha 750 Virago and 2006 Harley-Davidson 883 Sportster

I have always had a passion for motorcycles ever since I was a young boy growing up in the Sixties in Stratford, Connecticut. That's not surprising considering my dad owned several Harley-Davidson motorcycles. I still remember my dad picking me up from grammar school on his Harley — very cool for an 8-year-old boy. On my 16th birthday I was ready for my first motorcycle. Seeing Honda's ad campaign "You Meet the Nicest People on a Honda," I set my goal on a Honda CL77 Scrambler. My dad insisted I first learn to ride his 1,200cc Harley — not an easy task for a skinny 130-pound boy.

After learning to ride Dad's Harley, I headed over to my local Honda dealer with \$700 cash, earned from my paper route, to buy a new 1966 Honda CL77 Scrambler. At this moment, I knew my life was about to change. Riding my 305cc Scrambler to high school every day, I instantly transformed from a nerdy kid to a cool dude on a 305 Honda. The following year my brother Ray turned 16 years old and purchased a new

1967 Scrambler. This photo shows me and Ray in 1967 on our Scramblers. Ray's bike is totally stock while mine has new paint, a custom seat and, of course, straight pipes.

Fast forward 50 years, I wondered if any 305 Scramblers existed in running condition. I was surprised to see many for sale, but very few in the Northeast. I did find one in California on eBay advertised as original and in good running condition. I purchased the bike sight unseen for \$3,200 plus \$600 to ship it from California to my home in New Jersey. After a new set of spark plugs and some fresh gas, she fired up with only a few kicks.

Today I ride my Scrambler to local car and motorcycle shows and enjoy guys telling me how much fun they had on their 305 Scramblers. I tell them I rode to high school, college, and basically all over the state of Connecticut. I even met my wife on my Scrambler when she came up to me and asked for a ride, and the rest is history. Today after 50 years of marriage she refuses to get on the back stating she wants to be around for our five grandkids.

I enjoy all my vintage motorcycles, especially my Honda fours. However, I have the fondest memories of my teenage years every time I hop on my little 305 Scrambler to go for a ride around town. I tell my wife I'm taking my "little sweetie" for a ride and she affectionately smiles and says, "Be safe and enjoy."



Fred and his 305 Scrambler today (above). Ray (right) and Fred and their Scramblers in 1967.



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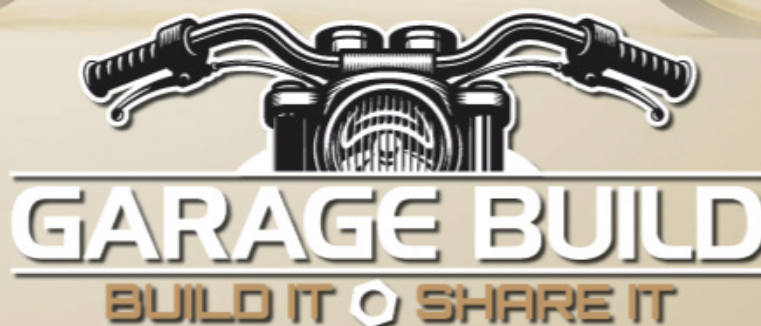
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READERS AND RIDERS



Randy Lambert's 1978 T140 (left) and 1963 Bonneville chopper (right).

way though, I really got into Brit bikes. I've had four Bonneville including my Bobber. The one I wish I'd never sold was my 1978 T140V. I kept it stock after buying it from the original owner who had only put 2,000 miles on it from new until I bought it in 1993! It was always a one- or two-kick starter and never once gave me any mechanical or electrical problems in the seven years I owned it, and I put a lot of miles on it riding with my club!

If you can believe it, I swapped it straight up for a 1963 Bonneville chopper. It was the most uncomfortable and vibratory torture machine I ever straddled! After I came to my senses, I got a 2003 Bonneville and eventually my current Bobber. I sure miss that '78. It was a smart looking, hairy-

chested machine! I enjoy the magazine immensely so keep up the great work!

Randy Lambert/Fort Worth, Texas

Randy,

That photo is a time capsule indeed. While you may never find your T140, there are still plenty of good ones around. We hope you find one! — Ed.

Love lost

I just read your editorial regarding the ones that got away. For me, it is a 1962 BMW R60/2. Not only was it a very clean original, low-mileage example, but it sported a perfect Heinrich touring tank. It also had fitted hard bags and, the best part, a BMW badged, boat-nosed sidecar with folding wind-screen and trunk with spare tire. In



Remembering a Z-1

The bike I wish I'd never sold? My 1973 Kawasaki Z-1. I bought it used in July 1978 while on leave from the Army. I rode it for those 30 days, then parked it and went back to Germany for 15 months. I retrieved it in September 1979 and rode the heck out of it for a few years, then sold it off and bought a Z-1R. Here's a photo with my 1975 Yamaha RD350 in the background. I bought it new in June 1976, shortly after high school graduation. I wish I still had it, too.

Ray Womack/St. Louis, Missouri

1978, after two years of ownership I sold it to a party in the Chicago area for a sum I will not share for the public shame it would cause me. I miss it, but at least I had it. Yes, there is love required, and then love lost.

Mark Steinman/Port Orange, Florida

The bike I wish I'd never sold

Reading the latest *Motorcycle Classics* you asked about significant bikes from our past. Here's a story about my X6 Hustler.

I was 17 and my mother remarried. My stepfather was a lead hand with Air Canada and we moved to Montreal. I went from a hick in the sticks to Expo '67 and a whole new world. I bought a 1968 X6 Hustler new for \$800. I rode the wheels off of that machine all over the West Island of Montreal. I got a part-time job at a Suzuki dealer and stupidly bought a new T250. It was not a patch on the X6 but a hard lesson learned.

Fifty-plus years later, I bought two carcasses that were destined for the landfill and poured my heart and soul into the project. This was to be the bike to recreate my wild youth. The frame was media blasted and powder coated along with all of the other black parts. The top end was re-bored with new pistons and rings. Not one single detail was overlooked. When I got the main carcass, the guy had paid for an extremely crappy red paint job. My '68 was



Two X6 carcasses (top) became one stunner.

blue and that is what this one was going to be. My paint guy looked at the article on the X6 in *Motorcycle Classics* and said "IROC blue and my wife's Lexus' silver." Fine by me.

When all was ready I switched on the ignition, seeing that familiar green neutral light and kicked it over. I put the choke on and it fired right up. I was 18 again on the lakeshore in Montreal.

I retired shortly after. I looked at the X6 and thought, "I already license and insure two bikes," (a '69 Norton, and an '01 Ducati) and so I sold it. I wish I hadn't. I contacted the buyer to see if he would sell it back to me, expecting the answer to be "no." After thinking it over, he decided to let me buy it back. I'm so pleased.

Cam Norris/Battersea, Ontario

Cam,

What a story! To have loved and to have lost two X6's — good grief. Congrats on the Suzuki's humble return, and may you ride the wheels off of this one also. — Ed.



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Big Breeze from Italy: 1971-1976 Benelli 650 Tornado

Timing may not be everything, but bad timing can scuttle the best of plans. Through most of the 1960s, parallel twins dominated the U.S. market for half-liter-plus motorcycles. And while Honda's CB450 could give a British twin a good run, Bonneville and Lightnings ruled the strip and the sales charts. Not surprising, then, that Pesaro-based Benelli — then the biggest motorcycle maker in Italy — would plan a 650cc parallel twin aimed at U.S. buyers.

Well established as the supplier of Wards-Riverside commuter bikes, Benelli should have had a strong tailwind. But U.S. importer Cosmopolitan lacked an adequate dealer network, and like other makers of big twins, Benelli hadn't reckoned with Honda's game-changing 1969 CB750 Four. Just when Benelli was gearing up for its new kick-start-only, OHV, drum-braked twin, Big Red's smooth four-banger arrived with an overhead cam, electric start and disc brake. The game was over before it started.

Not that the Tornado was a bad motorcycle. Designer Piero Prampolini used his experience with racing engines to pen a compact short-stroke, overhead-valve twin-cylinder engine with horizontally split cases and wet sump lubrication. Below the 84mm pistons were roller bearing rods driving a built-up 360-degree crankshaft with a large central flywheel running on four main ball and roller bearings. A single helical gear on the crank drove both the camshaft (also running on rollers) and the multiplate clutch. The 5-speed tranny drove the back wheel by chain. The 58mm stroke sucked mixture through a single 30mm Dell'Orto VHB carb. A DC generator supplied the 12-volt electrical



cal system, with ignition by battery/coil and contact breaker. Electrical components were by Bosch.

The power unit sat in a dual downtube spine frame with a Marzocchi front fork and dual coil spring/dampers at the rear, and spoked wheels running on Borrani alloy rims. A double-sided, single-leading-shoe front brake and rear SLS drum provided stopping power. A makeover for the 1973 season included a Bosch alternator and electric start — but the drum brake continued until production ceased in 1976.

The first Tornado prototype was shown in Milan in 1967, though it took four more years for production machines to appear. *Cycle World's* tester reported that the 1971 Tornado usually started first kick, but required a "healthy lunge" on the pedal. The long-throw, right-side shifter (one up, four down) was "deliberate rather than crisp," and the clutch pull "fairly stout." At low speeds, the Tornado "handles extremely awkwardly," feeling top heavy, said the tester, putting this down to the engine being located high in the frame. This was a result of Prampolini's wet sump design with the oil reservoir under the engine, raising the

ON THE MARKET 1975 Benelli 650 Tornado



In all of our searching, we came up with just two Tornados that have been on the market in recent years. First up is the 1975 Tornado you see here. Little information is given about the bike, but it appears to be original and complete. The odometer shows just 62 miles, but no mention is made of whether those are original miles or whether the bike has been restored and its mileage reset. This bike crossed the auction block at the Mecum Las Vegas motorcycle auction in 2018, selling for \$8,250. The second Tornado we found, was, curiously, also a yellow 1975 model, and also showed very low mileage. Missing a right side cover, the bike showed just 58 miles, and the listing stated that the miles were believed to be original. That bike sold at the Mecum Indy motorcycle auction in 2015, bringing just \$4,250.

"The more miles it accrued, the smoother and more responsive it got."

BENELLI 650 TORNADO

Years produced	1971-1976
Power	52-57hp @ 7,200rpm
Top speed	97mph (period test)
Engine	643cc (84mm x 58mm) air-cooled, OHV parallel twin
Transmission	5-speed, chain final drive
Weight/MPG	480lb wet/40-50mpg (avg.)
Price then/now	\$1,779 (1973)/\$2,000-\$9,000

crankshaft above the level of the wheel axles.

On the street, though, the Benelli turned out to be a "high-speed road-burner," with "superior road holding." It also proved to be durable and reliable throughout *Cycle World's* test. "The more miles it accrued, the smoother and more responsive it got. It didn't start vibrating or leaking or making strange noises." The only concerns were the lack of an air filter on the intake and a seat that was overly firm, combining with the stiff suspension to give a harsh ride.

The electric-start Tornado S2 arrived in 1973 with higher

compression, a pair of 29mm Dell'Orto VHBs, and a new seat and windshield. U.K. moto-journalist Rod Gibson tested the 1973 bike and noted that the engine thrived on revs and needed to see 4,500rpm to develop real power. Vibration was far less than a British twin though many components like fenders and handlebars were rubber mounted.

The Tornado struggled on until 1976, when new, cost-cutting Benelli owner Alejandro de Tomaso pulled the plug. Rugged and retrospectively stylish, Tornados now command a premium price in the classic motorcycle market. **MC**

CONTENDERS Parallel-twin alternatives to the Benelli Tornado

1973-1980 Triumph T140 Bonneville

By 1974, Triumph's Meriden factory was worker-occupied, dependent on government support, and had one product line: the 750 Bonneville and its single-carb sibling, the 750 Tiger. The machines that emerged from the workers co-op used the familiar 360-degree parallel twin engine, but now with five gears and a front disc brake. Much attention was focused on fixing the Bonnie's notorious deficiencies: Oil leaks were moderated; much improved Amal Mk2 carburetors were used from 1976; and electronic ignition followed in 1979. Shifting switched from right to left side in 1975, and a rear disc was fitted from 1976 — but electric start had to wait until the T140ES of 1980.

An anachronism at the time, the T140 is now a capable and rideable classic — a viable alternative to modern retro bikes. Parts are easy to find, and servicing is simple. Lightweight, easy to start, with responsive controls, a relatively smooth engine and confident handling, they're deservedly desirable and still relatively inexpensive, excluding the most sought-after models like the

limited-edition Silver Jubilee of 1977, and the T140D Special of 1979.

- 1973-1980
- 50hp @ 7,000rpm/110mph
- 745cc (76mm x 82mm) air-cooled, OHV parallel twin
- 5-speed, chain final drive
- 390lb (dry)/45-50mpg
- \$1,995 (1976)/\$3,000-\$10,000



1969-1979 Yamaha XS650

Benelli wasn't the only bike maker wanting to build a better Bonnie — and the Tuning Fork guys got their first 4-stroke pretty much right. The XS650's 360-degree crank and camshaft ran on roller and ball bearings, with horizontally split cases and a chain-driven single overhead cam. Starting was by kick-only until an electric starter was added for 1972, the same year the twin-leading-shoe drum front brake was swapped out for a disc. Early models were criticized for excessive vibration and poor handling, though both issues were later addressed with a heftier frame and use of rubber mounts.

Cycle World tested a 1979 XS650F and enjoyed its quick steering, light handling, broad powerband and relative lack of vibes, though a combination of transmission lash and jerky throttle transitions made traffic a chore. But it was the character of the XS that appealed to *Cycle World*: "It sounds like a motorcycle, not a two-wheeled Porsche; and feels like a motorcycle, not an electric golf cart." *Cycle Guide* summed up: "It doesn't leak, it doesn't

break, it doesn't require much attention and it doesn't cost much." And with more than 500,000 built, there are still plenty around.

- 1969-1979
- 53hp @ 7,000rpm
- 105mph
- 654cc (75mm x 74mm) air-cooled, SOHC parallel twin
- 5-speed, chain final drive
- 428lb (wet)/45-55mpg (avg.)
- \$1,399 (1972)/\$3,000-\$7,000



Morbidelli Motorcycle Museum goes up for auction, and the 2019 Barber Vintage Festival



A look down just one row of motorcycles in the famed Morbidelli Motorcycle Museum in Pesaro, Italy.

Morbidellis and more at the Stafford auction

Comprising approximately 300 motorcycles, and representing every decade of the 20th century, this important collection was built up by the museum's founder, motorcycle manufacturer and Grand Prix boss Giancarlo Morbidelli, over a period of 40 years. The auctioning of the Morbidelli Motorcycle Museum will take place at Bonhams' annual Autumn Stafford Sale, Oct. 18-20, 2019, in Stafford, England.

In fact, the size of the collection will extend the Autumn sale. "This is the largest single collection to be sold by Bonhams and as such means that we will extend our Autumn sale to three days for the first time. It really will be a unique opportunity for motorcycle collectors and enthusiasts from across the globe to bid for some truly special lots," says Ben Walker, International Department Director for Bonhams Collectors' Motorcycles.

Highlights of the collection include two examples from the Morbidelli Grand Prix racing motorcycle collection. First is the 1974 125cc Morbidelli ridden by the great Angel Nieto to second place in that year's Spanish and German Grand Prix. The second Morbidelli bike to go under the hammer is a 250cc machine ridden by 15-time Grand Prix world champion Giacomo Agostini, who rode for the team during its golden period in 1976, gaining a second place at Misano.

Other notable lots of the Morbidelli Collection include the 1964 Benelli 250 Grand Prix racing motorcycle, ridden and signed by two-time world champion Tarquino Provini, and a 1934 Benelli 175cc Bialbero ridden by Dorino Serfini, one of only three in the world. Also up for auction will be the 1964 Ducati 125cc 4-cylinder Grand Prix racing motorcycle (see our *Motorcycle Classics* story at bit.ly/125-four). See more on the web at bonhams.com

John Penton at the Barber Vintage Festival, Oct. 4-6, 2019

Join us for the 15th Annual Barber Vintage Festival, the largest vintage motorcycle event in North America, Oct. 4-6, 2019, at Barber Motorsports Park outside Birmingham, Alabama, with famed national champion enduro rider and entrepreneur John Penton as this year's Grand Marshal. Inducted into the AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame in 1998, Penton was influential in the growth of enduro and offroad motorcycling in the '60s and '70s, eventually founding Penton Motorcycles.

Penton will be the guest of honor at the Barber Museum's Friday night Motorcycles by Moonlight fundraiser, and we're anticipating his presence at the *Motorcycle Classics* tent during our Saturday Vintage Bike Show. This year we're putting the spotlight on Honda Fours, celebrating the

50th anniversary of the debut of the CB750. We'll award trophies in five categories (British, American, Japanese, European and Custom) plus special awards for Best Honda Four and Editor's Choice.



Donny Ables won the trophy for Best Japanese Rider with his 1978 Kawasaki KZ650R at the 2018 Barber Vintage Festival.

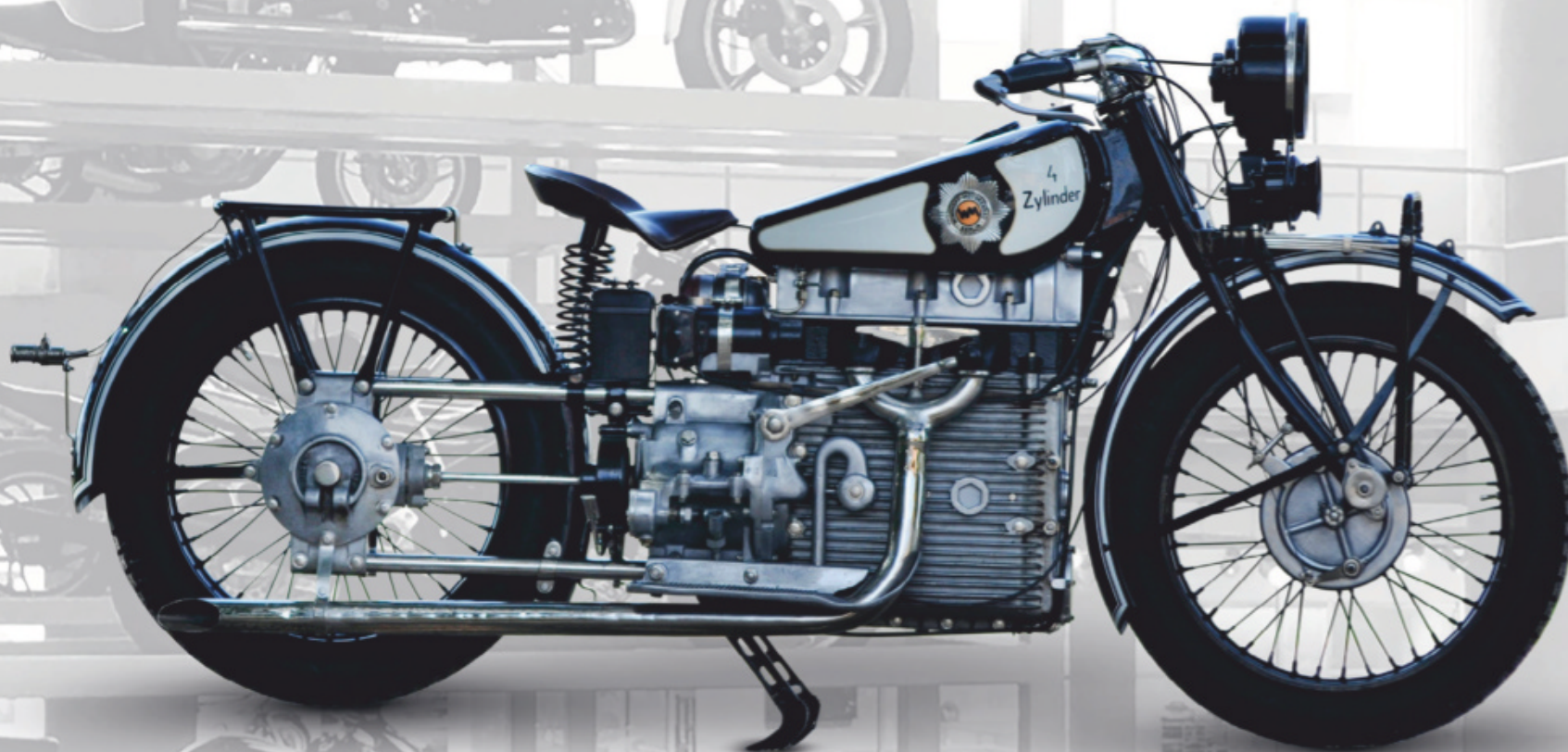
Enjoy AHRMA National Historic Cup Roadracing on the track, with vintage motocross, observed trials and cross country races happening in the surrounding fields and woods. The American Motor Drome Company's Wall of Death returns, and look for the Ace Corner at Turn 17, where you'll find a show within the show featuring café racers and custom builds. Bonhams will also return with an auction at the Barber Motorsports Museum on Saturday, and it's sure to be a highlight of the weekend.

For more information and event updates visit barbermuseum.org

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QUAIL 2019

The 100th anniversary of Brough Superior

Story by Margie Siegal, photos by Robert Smith

In 1919, George Brough started building luxury motorcycles in Nottingham, England, under the name Brough Superior. A test ride on one so impressed a journalist that he wrote that the marque was “the Rolls-Royce of motorcycles.” George, a marketing ace in addition to being a designer, picked up the phrase and used it repeatedly in his advertising.

Rolls-Royce was not happy seeing their good name used by an upstart motorcycle manufacturer. They wrote a stiff letter of complaint to Mr. Brough, who responded by inviting representatives to his factory. When the Rolls-Royce delegation arrived at the immaculately clean Brough factory, they saw a team of white-glove-wearing technicians putting together a Brough Superior. The fit and finish was superb. Impressed, they let George use the phrase. George had failed to explain that the bike was a special, destined for that year’s London motorcycle show.

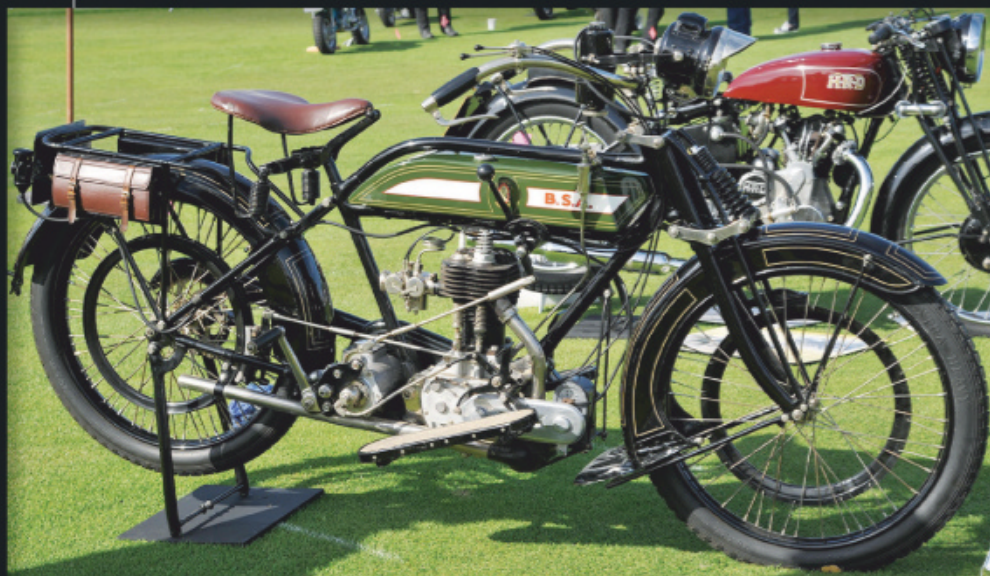
George would be very happy to see 10 of his hand-built creations on display as one of the four featured classes at the Quail Motorcycle Gathering, celebrating its 11th year in Carmel Valley, California, with over 3,000 participants, over 350 show bikes, the usual delicious lunch on real china plates and free ice cream. One of the Broughs at Quail had been George’s own personal bike. Brough Superiors are rare: Only 3,048 were built between 1919 and 1939, and about 1,000 of these are still in existence. It was a sporting gentleman’s motorcycle: The top of the line SS100 was capable of 110-120mph, and cost 180 pounds sterling. In the 1930s, 110mph was serious racing speed, and the average annual salary in Great Britain was 200 pounds per year.

Broughs are prized, not only for their rarity and value, but

also for their riding qualities. There are several rallies sponsored by the Brough Superior Club in England every year. Two of the Broughs displayed at Quail sported number plates: a 1926 machine owned by Brian Bossier had carried well-known vintage photographer and writer Paul d’Orleans across the United States in the 2018 running of the Cannonball cross country event for vintage motorcycles.

Owner Brian Bossier rode another one of his Broughs (he owns several) in the Cannonball. A New Orleans, Louisiana, native, he has a unique perspective on his bikes: “This one is Margaret Ann. She’s a fat ugly woman who can cook. Also has a sense of humor. Darlene is the redhead over there. She gave us trouble.” Darlene is indeed eye-catching — a photo of this 1925 SS 100 was used on the cover of the program given out to all Quail participants — but Margaret Ann (No. 38 in top photo), a less pristine machine, made it to the Cannonball finish line, and Darlene didn’t.

Another of the 10 on display was a Brough Superior Alpine Sports sidecar outfit. This Brough factory-built sidecar features a roll bar that doubles as an auxiliary gas tank. Jack Wells, the owner, explained that since the outfit only gets 25 miles to the gallon, the 2 gallons in the roll bar extend time between fill-ups an additional 50 miles. The side car also featured leaf springs for a comfortable ride and a four-point attachment to the motorcycle for rigidity (the industry standard was just three points). Chris Allen, a friend of Jack Wells who helps him work on his Broughs, says that the sidecar almost feels like it is rubber mounted. “Broughs were very innovative for their time. The Brough is a great bike. It runs well, is easy to start, and interesting to work on,” Chris says. The 12th edition of the Quail Motorcycle Gathering is scheduled for Saturday, May 16, 2020. **MC**



Main image on facing page: A group of 10 Brough Superiors held court, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the marque. Clockwise from left: Matt Blake's restoration of this 1953 Indian Chief, owned by Mike Oddo, won 1st place in the American class; the Revival Birdcage BMW won the Industry award; Budd Schwab's 1918 BSA Model H won 2nd place in the Antique class; William "Chip" Connor's beautiful 1939 Brough Superior SS100; Brian Bossier's 1929 Brough Superior 680 OHV won the Historic Vehicle Association's Preservation Award; Steve Pieratt's 1974 twin-engined Triumph Bonneville; Evan Clements' 1969 Suzuki TS250.

LIFE IS GOOD

1966 Triumph TR6SR

Story by Greg Williams

Photos by Jeff Barger

M

Make no mistake: kids are impressionable.

When Tom TeRonde was 11 years old, his dad bought him a Honda CB160 to tear around the family property on the outskirts of Oostburg, Wisconsin, where they had a few horses and grew Christmas trees. His four sisters were into the horses, leaving Tom as the only one in the family curious about internal combustion engines.

"Boys would often come around to hang out with my sisters," Tom says of his young family life. "And I clearly remember one day when three guys pulled up on two Triumphs and a BSA. That made quite an imprint on me. I hoped that one day I could get something like one of those Triumphs — it was the sight and the sound, and I thought it was a very cool way to get around."

Better than the small-bore Honda, at least, but Tom had to wait until he was 19 before an opportunity to acquire a Triumph presented itself. In 1977, Tom had just finished his first year of school at the University of Wisconsin. He went to visit a high school friend who happened to be selling a 1966 Triumph TR6SR.

The sidestand lug was broken off the frame, so it could only be parked on its centerstand. The speedometer didn't work, and there was no air filter. The distinctive Triumph badges and knee pads had been stripped off the tank, and it was painted white with stylized green flames.

"I could look past all of that," Tom laughs, and adds, "He told me he wanted to sell it because he found it hard to start. I asked how much he wanted for it and the price was \$300. I told him it was sold."

Tom had been saving money doing roofing work and that's how he paid for the Triumph. Apart from the Honda CB160, he'd never had or ridden a larger machine, but the Triumph, which he didn't find to be a recalcitrant starter, soon became a constant companion. He'd ride it from his home near Oostburg to campus in Platteville, a distance of some 200 miles. That wasn't a daily journey — only during semester breaks. When he finished his degree in radio and television broadcasting, a field he never did work in full time, he regularly used the Triumph for the next 20 years.

By the late 1990s, though, there was an accumulation of issues that forced Tom to park the Triumph. None of them separately would have been deal-breakers, but the clutch was slipping and one of the header pipes was loose at the exhaust spigot and he couldn't get it tightened down.

"I thought enough with the minor annoyances, and started dismantling the motorcycle," Tom reports. "But I'm no mechanic. I can get stuff apart, but getting it back together is another story. I realized soon I was in over my head."







1966 TRIUMPH TR6SR

Engine: 649cc air-cooled OHV parallel twin, 71mm x 82mm bore and stroke, 8.5:1 compression ratio, 40hp
Top speed: 96mph (approx.)
Carburetion: Single Amal Monobloc 1-1/8in
Transmission: 4-speed, chain final drive
Electrics: 12v, Tri-Spark electronic ignition
Frame/wheelbase: Single downtube cradle frame/ 55.5in (1,410mm)
Suspension: Telescopic front fork w/hydraulic damping, swingarm rear
Brakes: 8in (203mm) drum front, 7in (178mm) drum rear
Tires: 3.25 x 19in front, 4 x 18in rear
Weight (dry): 365lb (166kg)
Seat height: 30.5in (775mm)
Fuel capacity: 3.5gal (13.3ltr)

Cardboard boxes filled with parts and a bare frame were constant reminders to Tom of his “sweet, old motorbike.” He needed to find a mechanic, and through a friend of a friend, came up with an arrangement that saw him deliver the components to a backyard workshop. This didn’t turn out well. “After a year and a half of excuses, I showed up and think I got most of the parts back — it was hard to tell if anything was missing,” Tom says.

Triumph model development

Triumph’s TR6 was introduced in 1956 as a sporting machine aimed at the West Coast desert racers. Before delving too far into the TR6, however, let’s look back into the development of Triumph’s 650cc twin.

Prior to 1950, when Triumph released its 650cc 6T model, the manufacturer had only the 5T Speed Twin, developed by Edward Turner and introduced in 1937, and the T100 of 1939 as the largest bore machines in its range. Both were 500s. Immediately after World War II, dealers and customers alike were requesting that Triumph create a larger motorcycle, especially in North America where wide-open spaces and long, lonely roads taxed a 500cc machine. Turner didn’t immediately see the merits in boosting

the engine capacity of his parallel twin engine, but he finally acquiesced.

On the inside cover of a circa-1950 Triumph brochure, copywriters wrote: “1950 will be notable as the year of the production of a new model to be known as the ‘THUNDERBIRD,’ a 650 c.c. (40 cu. in.) high-performance motorcycle suitable for solo or sidecar, which we are confident will be as popular as the now classic ‘SPEED TWIN.’ The new highways being engineered all over the world demand even greater performance and reliability, and the ‘THUNDERBIRD’ has been evolved to meet these modern requirements.”

Triumph’s parallel-twin 650cc engine featured a three-piece crankshaft with a central flywheel turning on roller bearings at each end inside a cast aluminum crankcase. Alloy H-section connecting rods with plain, or Babbitt-style, bearings had an 82mm stroke and cast-iron barrels had a 71mm bore, providing an overall capacity of 649cc with a 7:1 compression ratio.

Geared camshafts, taking their cue from an idler gear turning on a pinion gear affixed to the right-hand side of the crank, rode high in the horizontally split crankcase, inlet cam to the rear and exhaust cam to the front.





A cast iron cylinder head had valves enclosed by cast alloy rocker boxes with an overhead oil feed taken off the scavenge side of the lubrication system, as oil was returned from the dry-sump crankcase to the external oil tank. The inlet cam drove a plunger-type oil pump. Ignition was by magneto, located just behind the cylinders, while electrical current was produced by a dynamo mounted in front of the engine.

A right-side foot shift lever stirred the gears in the separate 4-speed transmission and a 5-plate clutch lived under a highly polished primary cover on the left side of the engine. Power was transmitted from the engine to the transmission by chain through a ramp-and-spring cush drive sprocket to the clutch. All of these components were placed in a rigid-style frame with a hydraulic fork up front.

Triumph's Thunderbird proved to be a successful motorcycle, and in 1954 the company took the concept a step further and introduced the T110 with a revised cast-iron cylinder head, higher-compression pistons with a ratio of 8.5:1 and a larger Amal carburetor. Also new was the swingarm frame and at that time, the T110 was Triumph's fastest 650cc production motorcycle.



The air-cooled 649cc twin puts out about 40 horsepower, plenty for a bike weighing just 365 pounds dry.

The Trophy models

The TR5 Trophy debuted in 1949. Based on the Speed Twin and its 500cc engine, the Trophy had a high-level exhaust and the all-alloy, square-barrel top end from Triumph's WWII generator engine, and in 1951 the model was equipped with revised close-fin alloy cylinders and head.

Then, in 1956, Triumph offered the 650cc TR6 Trophy, an offroader equipped with the larger single-carb 649cc engine of the T110 Tiger but updated with an aluminum head and 8:1 pistons. The Trophy was in essence a street scrambler that could be ridden to work during the week and then, come the weekend, on the dirt thanks to a quickly detachable Lucas headlight, high-level exhaust and moisture-proof magneto.

The TR6, like the 6T before it, sold well in the U.S., and the model was spun into three derivatives: the TR6A, with freer-flowing low-level exhaust pipes and a tachometer; the TR6B, with a mid-level 2-into-1 exhaust setup and no tachometer; and the TR6C with the exhaust system of the T110 and no tachometer. By 1958, the TR6's alloy cylinder head was slightly altered and, according to author Ian Falloon in his book *The Complete Book of Classic and*



Modern Triumph Motorcycles: 1937-Today, was available only as the TR6A road-going model and the TR6B “scrambler” machine.

Triumph’s big news for 1959 was the introduction of the sporting twin-carb T120 Bonneville. The TR6 Trophy would then after be known as the single-carb machine, but apart from the number of carburetors, the two models were similar in specification.

By 1963, the year Triumph moved from separate transmission/engine construction for its 650cc machines to full unit construction, the TR6 was offered as the TR6SS (siamese, low-level exhaust), TR6SR (separate low-level headers and mufflers) and the TR6SC (with separate high-rise headers and mufflers). All TR6 motorcycles used the new-for-1963 single-downtube frame, which offered increased rigidity compared to the duplex-frame of 1960 to 1962.

The engine cylinder head increased from eight mounting studs to nine to address an issue with combustion chambers which occasionally cracked. The rocker boxes sprouted fins around their bases and the inspection caps shrank in size. A 2-row primary chain was included, the magneto dropped, and

coil and points ignition took on the job of making sparks.

The last year for the TR6SR designation was 1966 — the year of Tom’s machine. After that, the “S” was dropped and in the years following it was the TR6, TR6R and TR6C.

For 1966, the TR6SR had a 3-1/2-gallon slimline gas tank with new “eyebrow” Triumph badges and a parcel rack screwed to the tank top. Instead of a 6-volt electric system, the voltage had

been increased to 12 and was regulated by Zener diode with a finned heat sink mounted to the front fork, immediately below the headlight. In 1966, the TR6SR was available in Pacific Blue and Alaskan White and the twin saddle featured a gray top and white ribbing. The fenders were painted white, accented by a blue

strip lined with a gold pinstripe. The single-carb TR6 continued until 1973, when it was dropped from the Triumph range.

Going back together

Tom’s 1966 TR6SR was not a stock motorcycle when he had it. He remembers it with a taller handlebar and custom paint job, and he wasn’t fussy about it going back together to original specification — he just wanted to ride it. That’s when his

“Tom wasn’t concerned about the bike being original, so we had quite a bit of freedom.”



nephew, Ben Burr, suggested Tom visit with Brady Ingelse of Retrospeed in Belgium, Wisconsin.

"For a brief while, Ben worked at Brady's shop," Tom says. "I went to visit Retrospeed and realized this is where the bike needed to be. As a roofer, I've always been a fan of bartering for labor," he continues. "Brady's house needed a new roof. I put a roof on his porch and dropped off what remained of my Triumph at Retrospeed."

Brady picks up the story. "The project came in with multiple gas tanks and raw steel fenders and the frame had been painted," he says, and adds, "Tom wasn't concerned about the bike being original, so we had quite a bit of freedom."

The entire time Tom owned the bike it never had a kickstand, as the mounting tab had long ago broken away. That was one of Tom's only three requests — he wanted a sidestand. As Brady explains, that's not as simple as it sounds. "You need the weight of the engine, the forks and shocks have to be mounted and the motorcycle has to be together and on wheels before you can determine the correct lean angle."

"Through all the years since 1977 when he bought the Triumph, Tom never owned another motorcycle."

As pieces of the Triumph were restored, the TR6 slowly took shape as it was loosely assembled to ascertain the lean angle.

As delivered, the top end of the engine had been removed from what looked to be an unmolested bottom end. Regardless, the engine came apart and it was determined that early on in the bike's life there had been some aluminum repair to the cases. The cams were shot, the cylinder bores needed attention and the valve guides were cracked, however the crank journals looked good after a polish and the connecting rods, with new shell bearings, were returned to service. From the bottom to the top, Retrospeed went completely through the engine, correcting all that ailed it.

Of all the gas tanks Tom dropped off, Brady found none of them had the mounting points for a parcel rack — and Tom wanted that rack, the second of his requests. Brady purchased a 3-1/2-gallon tank with the threaded bungs to secure the chrome grid and proceeded to clean up the dents. He also lined it with a Red-Kote tank sealing kit.

The forks got new stanchions, and the lowers were powder coated black. Out back, Hagon shocks went between the rear



subframe and the swingarm. Stainless-steel spokes from Buchanan's Spoke & Rim were used to lace the silver powder coated hub in the front and the black powder coated hub out back into new chrome rims. Duro tires went on, front and rear, and the brake shoes were renewed. All control cables were made by Retrospeed. The last of Tom's three requests were the tall, almost mini-ape-hanger handlebars that his bike had while he'd ridden it.

A replacement sidestand and tab were sourced from Mitch Klempf of Klempf's British Parts (klempfsbritishparts.com). With the lean angle ascertained, the C-bracket of the tab was hammered around the perimeter of the lower frame tube before being welded in place.

From that point forward, the TR6SR came together rather quickly with fresh Pacific Blue and Alaskan White paint applied to the gas tank and fenders by Bill Krzyzanek of Kaliber Collision Repair in Port Washington, Wisconsin. To finish off the paint work, Allen Beck of Beck Lines in Ozaukee County pulled the gold pinstripes. An aftermarket seat was sourced, a new Amal Monobloc carburetor was mounted to the intake

manifold and a replacement EMGO exhaust system was installed. For reliability, a Tri-Spark solid state ignition system was added.

Tom stopped into Retrospeed once in a while to see the progress, but he let Brady take his time with the project. Through all the years since 1977 when he bought the Triumph, Tom never owned another motorcycle. He rode it for close to 20 years, and it had been apart for close to 20 years. So, more than 40 years later, as of this writing in June 2019, Tom has been reunited with his Triumph.

He says, "Now that it has been restored to showroom condition, it is a bit surreal. For sure this is the same bike I used to have, but now with better than original electrics, new tires, new everything — it's just amazing and a joyous experience to ride."

Holding up his end of the bargain, Tom will replace the remainder of the roof on Brady's house. And, perhaps recalling the lads who once pulled up to court his sisters, Tom concludes, "A big British bike this old has a style and a feel that is one of a kind. I'm so grateful for getting to have that experience all over again. Life is good." **MC**



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CHEAP THRILLS

1968 Honda CL90

Story by Margie Siegal
Photos by Nick Cedar

Don Stockett, one of the principals of Vintage Motorcycle Rescue, a classic Japanese motorcycle restoration business near Sacramento, California, was on a ride through the Sierra foothills with the Vintage Japanese Motorcycle Club when one rider had a carburetor problem.

A bike needing a little roadside TLC is not uncommon on a vintage run. Everyone pulls over, and the more mechanically adept attendees get a chance to show off their wrenching skills. What happened next on that day, however, was a little unusual. As Don tells it:

"We had all pulled into a parking lot and one of our members was taking the carburetor apart. This guy pulls up in a pickup truck. He yells out the window, 'I've been following you guys for miles hoping you would stop. Anyone here interested in buying a CL90?' I asked how much he wanted for it. '\$300.' I knew what that bike's value was, and figured that even if it was a total basket case it was worth \$300. I told him I would buy it."

"I got the guy's address and phone number and showed up at his house two hours later with a pickup truck. The bike looked a little tired and dirty, but it ran and was complete. Even the exhaust muffler looked OK. It had a license plate, registration, and one of those plastic cylinders to hold the registration that some states used to require. Thing was, the owner started insisting he didn't say \$300, he said \$350. I pulled my cash out and counted it — I had \$348 on me. He agreed to take the \$348. This is my \$348 Honda CL90."

Way back when

In the 1960s, Honda was on a roll. After working hard to establish a dealership network in the United States and gain acceptance for its products, the company was just in time to catch the wave of the baby-boom generation entering its teens and looking for cheap transportation, fun and excitement. Honda offered all three.

One of the keys to Honda's ultimate success was its careful study of the American market and its willingness to design bikes that Americans wanted to buy. Honda was able to do this due to its huge market in Asia — at the time, Honda was the world's largest motorcycle manufacturer — with resulting deep pockets. By 1964, American Honda was offering 14 different models, each keyed to a different group of potential buyers. There were the 250 and 305 Superhawk overhead cam sporty twins, the CB160, a smaller OHC twin, touring 250 and 305 Dreams, the ever-popular







1968 HONDA CL90

Engine: 89.6cc, 2-valve overhead cam, air-cooled 4-stroke single cylinder, 50mm x 45.6mm bore and stroke, 8.2:1 compression ratio, 8hp @ 9,500rpm (claimed)

Top speed: 70mph (factory claim) 62mph (tested, with 200lb rider)

Carburetion: Keihin III 20mm

Transmission: 4-speed, left foot shift, chain final drive

Electrics: 6v, coil and breaker points ignition

Frame/wheelbase: Pressed steel, swingarm rear end/47in (1,194mm)

Suspension: Telescopic forks front, dual shocks rear

Brakes: 4in SLS drum brake front and rear

Tires: 2.5 x 18in front, 2.75 x 18in rear

Weight (dry): 202lb (92kg)

Fuel capacity/MPG: 1.8 gal (6.8ltr)/176mpg @ 25mph (claimed)

Price then/now: \$275 (est.)/\$1,600-\$4,000

Honda Cub, and several very small trail bikes.

Honda was also able to quickly identify when particular bikes were not selling in the United States, change dealer inventory and come up with more promising machines. In the early Sixties, Honda was selling several types of pushrod-operated small displacement singles. Although the 50cc Cub was a huge hit, Honda's larger displacement singles were down on power compared with similar machines offered by other manufacturers. Honda's answer was to design overhead cam 90cc single cylinder machines. At the time, most overhead cam

machines were competition-only, and an overhead cam street bike was a real novelty.

In 1960, Honda had opened a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Suzuka, with the facilities and engineering staff to design new models quickly and then manufacture them economically. Overhead cam machines like the Superhawk, the CB160 and the 90cc singles would not have been possible without Honda's massive investment in tooling.

The 90cc singles quickly proved themselves as both fun and reliable. Honda sold millions of these peppy little motorcycles, not only in the United States, but all over Asia. Although early-Sixties Hondas needed improvement in the handling department, they were





reliable and oil-tight. Many of the larger Hondas had electric starters, 12-volt electrical systems and reasonably bright headlights. Many prospective owners were more interested in easy starting, low maintenance and reliability than great handling, and they bought Hondas in droves.

From S90 to CL90

The first version of the 90cc OHC single, the S90, first went on sale in the U.S. in October 1964. It had a lightweight pressed steel frame, telescopic forks, swingarm rear suspension and a separate front fender. Available colors were white, black, scarlet red (later replaced with candy red) and candy blue. The S90 sold in large numbers, and in 1967 Honda announced the CL90, basically the same bike, but with a high side pipe. Honda had discovered that a lot of people would buy bikes with high pipes and an offroad “look,” even if the owner never actually left pavement. The CL90 is now more of a collector’s item, since it was not manufactured in as large of numbers as the S90. These two bikes were joined in 1969 for the one-year-only SL90, which was a real dual sport machine. All of the 90cc singles shared the pressed steel frame and OHC engine, which had an oversquare

bore and stroke of 50mm x 45mm and would rev over 9,500rpm. A 4-speed constant mesh transmission and a reliable multiplate wet clutch completed the package.

The CL90 frame came in candy red, candy blue and black, with a silver tank fitted with black rubber knee pads on all models. The fenders and exhaust were chrome, unlike earlier S90’s, which came with painted fenders. It was mostly bought by teenagers who used it to get to school, after-school jobs and the local hamburger stand. Many kids also took their bikes offroad for trail high jinks.

In 1969, some states, including Nevada, limited riders under the age of 16 to bikes under 5 horsepower — considerably less than the 8 horsepower the CL90 produced. Honda wanted to sell a bike that could be purchased by any teenager. At first, Honda marketed 90cc singles with restrictive carburetors to reduce power. For 1970, Honda introduced an updated line of 70cc singles, aimed especially at the teenage market.

Even though it has been 50 years since Honda’s 90cc singles were available in the United States, there are thousands still around, mostly S90’s and SL90’s. While a CL90 is not exactly rare, it is uncommon to come across



The svelte tank holds 1.8 gallons (top). The chrome high pipe exhaust was all the rage.

The high scrambler-style bars add offroad style (right). Owner Don Stockett enjoys a ride aboard his restored CL90 (bottom right).

one, which is why Don Stockett snapped up this bike. This CL90 was close to stock, which is even more unusual. The reliable engine and the light-but-sturdy frame of these small overhead cam bikes has inspired all sorts of backyard mechanics and carport race teams. They were modified with larger carburetors, trick cams, big bore kits, improved suspension and racing tires and turned into everything from little road racers to light-weight enduro machines.

As a result, would-be restorers often end up with a bike that is heavily modified, and have to engage in serious detective work to figure out what was originally on the bike. The carburetor, carburetor manifold and exhaust system changed with the model and year. Incorrect parts may affect quiet running and, if you enter the bike in a show, this will cause you to lose points.

Reviving and restoring

Don took his \$348 Honda home and had his business partner, Geoff Sprague, take the drivetrain apart. The CL90 was not only basically stock, but also in surprisingly good shape, needing only a cleanup and adjustment. "The bike had been loved and ridden its entire life. It's just that when we got it, it was recently neglected." Even the seat and the exhaust system — parts that are often worn out — were usable. Geoff and Don replaced all the cables, changed the oil and installed new brakes and new Heidenau tires. Don says that parts are not only readily available, but inexpensive. "Anything for 90s is available. There are lots of providers on eBay. The best sources are in Thailand or Malaysia. There is a very popular kit that will turn a 90cc into 120cc." The one item that was not easily available was a new fuel tank. The tank that came with the CL90 was tired and had a small dent, so Don had it professionally repaired and repainted, which cost almost as much as he had paid for the entire bike. The knee pads are the original parts, but metal reproductions replaced the faded round plastic badges. NOS badges are no longer available.

The lights are 6-volt, and the headlight is not that bright. The small headlight shell is less than a half-inch short of the space needed to install an LED system. Vintage Motorcycle Rescue likes to put LED headlights in its



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Ex-Angel Nieto, 1974 MORBIDELLI 125CC GRAND PRIX RACING MOTORCYCLE
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Ex-Dorino Serfini, 1934 BENELLI 175CC BIALBERO RACING MOTORCYCLE
Ex-Dario Ambrosini, 1950 BENELLI 250CC GRAND PRIX RACING MOTORCYCLE
Ex-Tarquino Provini, 1964 BENELLI 250 GRAND PRIX RACING MOTORCYCLE
1964 DUCATI 125CC 4-CYLINDER GRAND PRIX RACING MOTORCYCLE

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restorations, and this was a disappointment. Don did locate a 6-volt trickle charger, and hardwired a one-way charging plug to the battery. The plug hides under the seat, and makes it easy to keep the battery charged. The small drum brakes are adequate to stop the bike, given the speeds it is usually ridden.

Although Don is in business restoring classic Japanese motorcycles and selling his award-winning restorations, this bike is not for sale. It is not only the unofficial pit bike for Vintage Motorcycle Rescue at shows, but also gets taken out and thrashed around local twisty roads. It's street legal, with turn signals and a horn, and handles pretty well. Geoff loves riding a slow bike fast. We take it on Vintage Japanese Club rides and on our "test loop," 50 miles of local roads that we use to test new restorations. Top speed is 60mph, maybe 62 with a tailwind. "I've heard claims that it will get up to 70mph, but I doubt it. It might get up to that speed with a really light rider with a tailwind and a downhill slope," Don says.

"Everything about the CL90 is simple and easy," Don says. A properly set up CL90 can be easily started by a skinny 14-year-old boy who has not been eating his Wheaties. You just turn on the gas and the ignition, prod the kickstarter until the piston is up to top dead center, and kick. "You can literally do

it with your arm," Don says. He also says that the CL90 makes very little noise — making it easier for a teenager to sneak off before finishing chores — and shifts easily, with a light clutch.

First gear is really low, and around-town riders will spend most of their time in second or third. Don says there is a big jump between third and fourth. "You need to keep the power on through the curves. If you let off the gas, it takes a long time to get it back up to speed." Maintenance is also simple. Once set up properly, the Keihin carburetor can be left alone, except for an occasional adjustment to the idle. Don says it is important to change the oil every 1,000 miles or once a year, whatever comes first, and strongly suggests oil specifically formulated for motorcycles, which has a higher zinc content. Ethanol gas is corrosive to rubber carburetor parts, and Don suggests turning off the gas a mile from home and letting the bike run until the fuel in the carburetor is used up if the bike is going to be stored for any period of time.

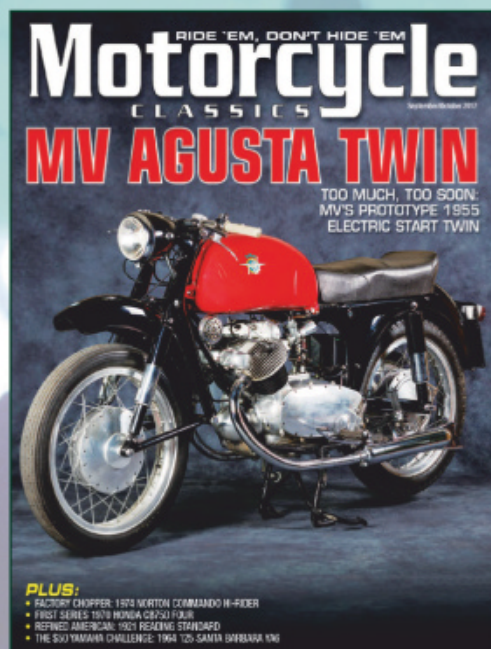
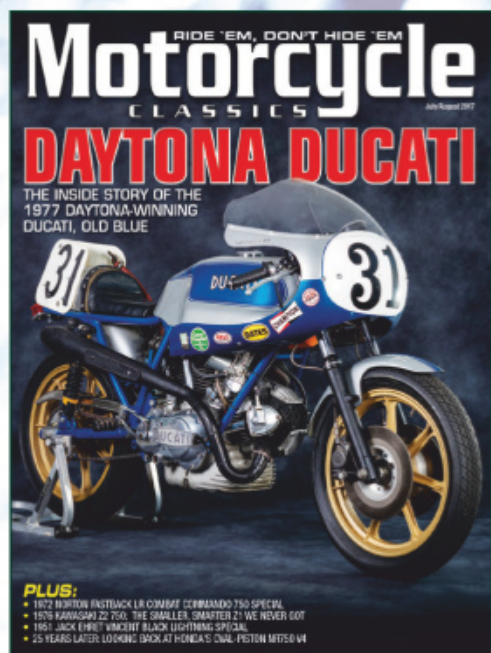
"If you are riding a 90, you are guaranteed to have a big smile on your face," Don says. He really likes his \$348 find. "It's got this little pressed steel frame, which is surprisingly light and strong. Parts are available and cheap. It's like a motorized bicycle, but the darn little thing has a heart and a soul, and it's doing everything it can to make you happy." **MC**

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MILITARY MISSION

Indian Model 741

Story and photos by Joe Berk

To better understand the Indian Model 741 U.S. Army World War II motorcycle featured here, we need to start with a bit of background.

During the years preceding World War II, Harley-Davidson and Indian emerged as the two main U.S. survivors in an industry that earlier in the century consisted of hundreds of motorcycle manufacturers. The post-Depression, pre-World War II U.S. motorcycle market was in terrible shape due to the advent of mass production and low-cost automobile manufacturing. Motorcycles had fallen out of favor as basic transportation. Harley-Davidson and Indian both catered to the police and civilian motorcycle markets, but sales were very low. When the Army asked Harley-Davidson and Indian to develop motorcycles for military use, neither manufacturer was in any condition to support a massive buildup. Indian was operating at about 5 percent of capacity, much of its equipment had been sold during the Depression, and that which remained was old. Indian was in terrible shape and might have gone out of business; Harley was only a little better.

The military need

World War II changed Harley and Indian fortunes even before U.S. involvement. The armies of other countries needed motorcycles for their war efforts and that fueled sales for both companies. Indian sold 5,000 Chiefs to the French. Here at home and as the U.S. was swept into World War II, our Army recognized a need for military motorcycles. Motorcycle-mounted military police could lend order to road marches and mass movements of men and equipment; military motorcyclists could get in front of advancing units for reconnaissance. The Army needed motorcycles, and that resulted in a specification to define what the military bikes should be.

The resulting Army specification called for a 500cc engine, which Army engineers thought would be enough. The Army also asked for left-





1942 INDIAN MODEL 741

Engine: 30.5ci (500cc) air-cooled sidevalve V-twin, 15hp @ 4,800rpm
Top speed: 60mph
Carburetion: Single carburetor
Transmission: 3-speed, foot-operated clutch with hand-operated left or right shifting, chain final drive
Electrics: Battery, coil and breaker points ignition
Suspension: Girder front with adjustable friction damping, rigid rear, spring-mounted seat
Brakes: Drum brakes front and rear
Tires: 3.5 x 18in front and rear
Weight: 456lb (205.5kg)
Price then/now: \$480/\$8,000-\$17,000

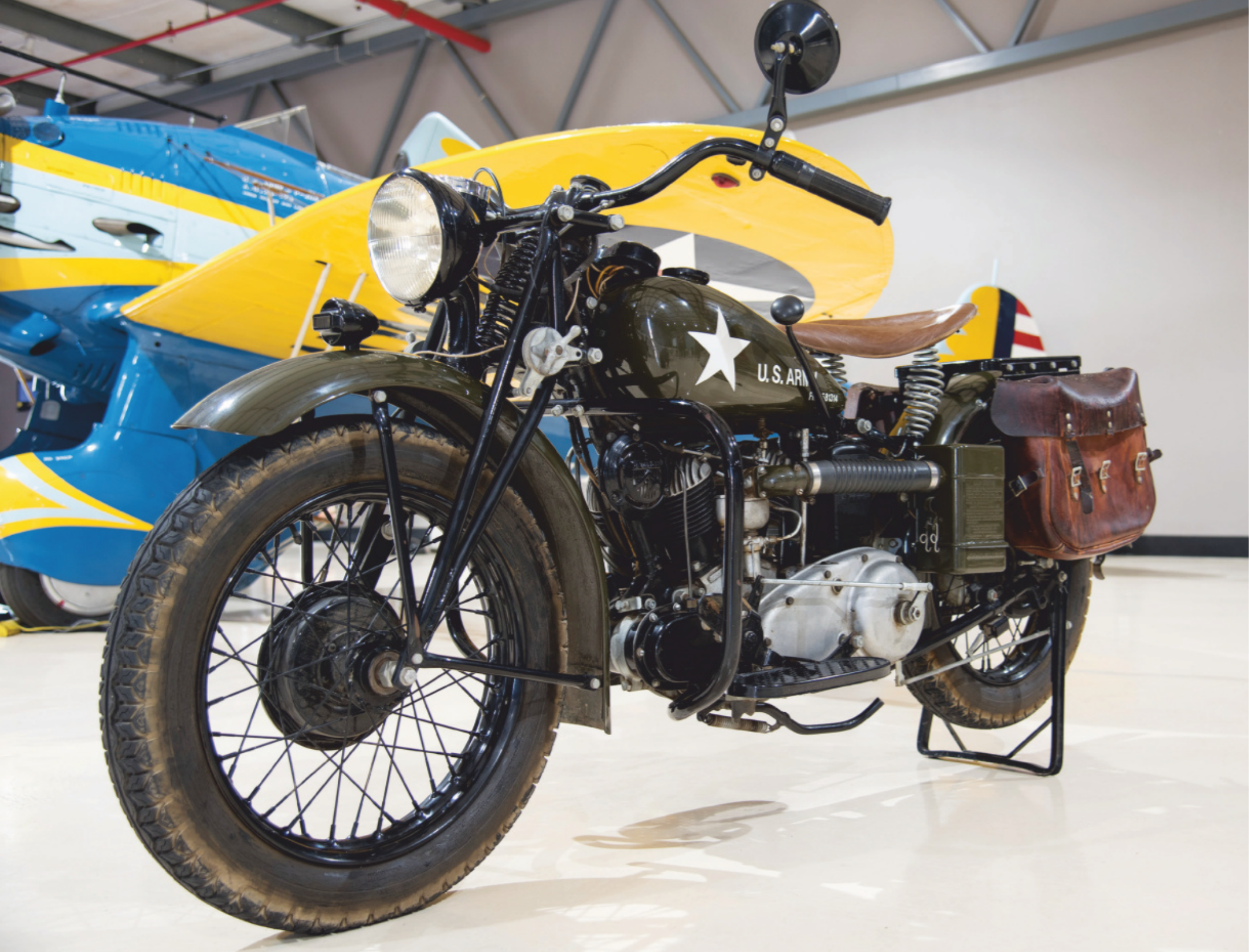
Note the foot-operated clutch and the hose from the air filter to the carburetor on the left side of the engine (far left).

pression (5:1) engine and "A" stood for Army. (Though 5:1 compression sounds low, it was greater than the lower-compression WA model that Harley also built.) Harley extended the WLA's forks 2 inches for improved ground clearance, added an engine skid plate, painted the motorcycle olive drab, and bolted on a

rifle scabbard and an ammo can. Indian submitted its 30.5-cubic-inch Model 741 with similar modifications. To the chagrin of its engineers, the Army found that Mr. Davidson had been right; the

hand throttles, a requirement rumored to be based on the need to keep the shooting hand free. Indian, more desperate for military business than Harley-Davidson, complied with the Army specifications. It already had the 500cc V-twin Junior Scout, informally known as the "30-50" (500cc is 30.5 cubic inches). Harley-Davidson did not have a 500cc motorcycle, nor were they interested in developing one. William Davidson told a presumably somewhat miffed Army a smaller bike would not meet the Army's needs, and Harley submitted a modified flathead 45 (Harley's 750cc V-twin) for evaluation. Harley's called their motorcycle the WLA. "W" was the model designation, "L" indicated a high-com-





Harley was clearly a better motorcycle for the military mission. That conclusion notwithstanding, the Army could not buy as many motorcycles as it needed from Harley-Davidson, so production contracts went to both Harley and Indian.

The World War II military motorcycle mission

Unlike Germany, the U.S. Army did not intend to use its motorcycles in combat. The Army was aware of Germany's use of motorcycle rifle companies as combat units, and at one point it may have entertained similar thoughts for its military motorcycles, but Army motorcycles were never intended to be combat vehicles. The Army assigned motorcycles to its infantry and armored divisions. In these units, motorcycles were primarily used by couriers and messengers, but the infantry and armored divisions also used motorcycles for reconnaissance. The speed, agility and maneuverability of the Army's Harley-Davidsons and Indians made motorcycle-mounted scouting a natural use of the machines. Armored and infantry divisions would typically have 200 motorcycles. Military police units used motorcycles for traffic control and other police duties.

Harley and Indian military motorcycles

Harley-Davidson built four military motorcycles during the war: the aforementioned WLA, the WLC (Canada's version of the WLA), the Knucklehead EL Overhead Valve model (small numbers were delivered to a few lucky soldiers) and the XA (an experi-

mental motorcycle based on a horizontally opposed flathead twin, à la BMW). The WLA was the U.S. Army's preferred military Harley-Davidson, and Harley built lots of them. Harley-Davidson sold 88,000 military motorcycles to the United States, England, Canada, China, India and Russia. In addition to the 88,000 complete military motorcycles, Harley built enough spare parts to build 30,000 more motorcycles. Significantly, Harley continued to build civilian models during the war.

Indian produced approximately 38,000 motorcycles during World War II, and the company essentially devoted its entire manufacturing capacity to military production. Indian made almost no civilian motorcycles during the war (the company did not even print a catalog in 1942), and it produced only a few police motorcycles during that time. Although the U.S. Army used the Model 741 during World War II, most of the military motorcycles Indian manufactured went to the Allies (including Great Britain, Canada, Poland, Australia and Russia). Like Harley, Indian also built several military models during World War II. These included the Model 741 you see here, the Chief (the Military Chief was based on the 74-cubic-inch Police Chief), the Model 640B (a detuned 45-cubic-inch V-twin based on Indian's civilian model), the M1 (a lightweight 221cc single intended to serve with paratroopers, although there is no evidence it ever did), and the Model 841 (the Model 841 was Indian's answer to the Army request to emulate the BMW; it used shaft drive and a transverse 90-degree V-twin, like Moto Guzzi does today).

Like Harley's WLA, the Model 741 was Indian's primary military motorcycle, and it formed the bulk of Indian's World War II production.

There's a bit more to the Harley versus Indian World War II story. During the war, Harley had a significant cost advantage over Indian. The Army paid \$380 for a new WLA; a new Model 741 was a hundred bucks more at \$480.

Motorcycle training

Both Harley-Davidson and Indian operated motorcycle operation and maintenance schools for the Army at factories in Milwaukee, Wisconsin (home to Harley-Davidson), and Springfield, Massachusetts (home to Indian). The training included riding on rough terrain, through streams, and in other difficult conditions. At the Army's direction, the Harley and Indian schools taught soldiers how to lock the rear wheel, lay the motorcycle onto its side, roll into a prone position and fire the Thompson submachine guns carried in both motorcycles' forward-mounted scabbards.

Performance

As mentioned above, the Model 741 was based on Indian's existing civilian model Junior Scout, with a 500cc V-twin engine. As Harley-Davidson had done, Indian extended the front forks and the rear frame for greater ground clearance. The Model 741 used the much-larger Indian Chief's transmission for increased reliability. The Model 741 had a rifle scabbard on the right front fender and an ammunition container on the left front fender (not present on the motorcycle shown in these photos). The Model 741 weighed 456 pounds (less than the Harley WLA), but the reduced power of the 741's 30-cubic-inch engine (compared to the Harley's 45-cubic-inch engine) gave the performance edge to Harley. Both machines were detuned versions of their civilian counterparts. The Indian Model 741, like the Harley-Davidson WLA, was not a high-performance motorcycle. The Model 741 had a top speed of 60mph; the Harley WLA was marginally faster. The Army was more interested in reliability than in top speed.

Model 741 operation

Today, starting a modern motorcycle involves pushing a button and let-



Note the blackout taillight for night convoy duty. The bike still has its U.S. Army saddlebags.

ting the engine management system do the rest. The Model 741 requires much more operator involvement. The steps in starting the Model 741 include making sure the motorcycle is not in gear, opening the fuel petcock, moving the choke to the fully choked position, opening the throttle a quarter turn, kicking the engine's kickstarter twice to prime the carburetor, moving the right hand grip advance/retard control to the retard position, moving the choke lever back to a partially choked position, switching the ignition on, giving the kickstarter a healthy kick, and then adjusting the spark advance and throttle controls to positions allowing the engine to warm.

To those accustomed to modern motorcycles, the Indian 741 controls and lighting are significantly different.

As mentioned, the throttle is in the left twist grip and ignition timing is manual (it is advanced or retarded with the right twist grip). There are no turn signals, but the motorcycle is equipped with blackout lights for night convoy operations. The clutch is foot-operated on the left side of the motorcycle, and unlike Harley foot clutches of the era, it is engaged with the heel (by rocking the clutch lever to the rear) and disengaged with the toe (by rocking the lever forward). Most Indians had the handshift lever on the right side of the tank, although it was a fairly easy



Paul and Cindy De Laurell, guardians of the Indian 741 at the Planes of Fame Museum.

“The significant use of the motorcycle as a military vehicle fell out of favor toward the end of World War II.”

conversion to move the shift lever to the left side of the motorcycle (as you see on the Model 741 here). You see Model 741s in both configurations (when you see them at all, as surviving Model 741s are much rarer than WLA Harleys).

Tides turned

The significant use of the motorcycle as a military vehicle fell out of favor toward the end of World War II (the Army ultimately turned to the Jeep as its primary small vehicle). That notwithstanding, Harley-Davidson fared well and World War II set the tone for its postwar success. Indian's strategy for meeting World War II production needs (i.e., focusing nearly exclusively on military production) ultimately led to its demise. Indian sold 38,000 motorcycles during the war (less than half of what Harley did). Indian struggled after the war and it was never able to match Harley-Davidson's postwar civilian and police sales success. The onslaught of the lighter, faster and better-handling vertical twins from Britain didn't help, either. Indian limped along for a few more years, changing ownership and then offering rebadged British Royal Enfield vertical twins with Indian nameplates. That strategy flopped, too. Indian folded its tent, declared bankruptcy, and went out of business in 1953.

Chino's Planes of Fame and Robert Pond

The Indian 741 shown here is proudly displayed by the Planes of Fame Museum in Chino, California. Planes of Fame is arguably one of the best places in the world to see vintage warbirds, including many from World War II. This Indian Model 741 motorcycle was previously a part of the Robert Pond collection. Pond was a particularly interesting man. Born in Minnesota in 1924, he entered the family business (tiles and floor polishing and cleaning equipment) to become its eighth employee. At the end of his career (when he sold the business and retired), it had grown into an organization employing thousands that sold for a rumored \$500 million. Pond trained in the Navy Air Corps in World War II, left when the war ended, and returned to build the family business into an industrial giant. Along this journey, Pond continued flying, designed aircraft and started collecting and restoring classic aircraft, automobiles and motorcycles (including the Indian 741 you see here). When Pond died in 2007, his family permanently loaned this Model 741 to the Planes of Fame Museum. Paul De Laurell and his wife, Cindy, both volunteers at Chino's Planes of Fame Museum, cleaned the fuel tank, fuel lines and carburetor, poured a little aviation gasoline into the fuel tank, and the Indian fired right up. **MC**



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THE HONOR GUARD

Fifty years ago, three men loved and cherished these four vehicles. They're now gone, so we're carrying their flags for them.

Story by John L. Stein
Photos by Seth DeDoes

As urban legend has it, the hamburger was a spontaneous pairing of a beef patty and a bun. Likewise, the Amphicar was a sly fitment of a Triumph drivetrain and propellers into a water-tight convertible to form a car and boat, all in one. And Alice Cooper, the mash-up of a minister's son and a makeup mirror was ... well, go watch *Wayne's World* for details! Laud or lament these cultural icons as you please, but such disparate elements sometimes do yield splendidly offbeat successes.

Might this include the odd quartet of barn-find vehicles seen here? Let's take a visit. The beefsteak of 1950s English motorcycling, these 500cc Matchless G80 CS singles were among the first factory scramblers, a full decade before motocross arrived stateside. With aluminum engine cases, aluminum heads and magneto ignition, the big Matchboxes were simultaneously maximum and minimalist. Many, like these 1954 and 1955 models, were stripped of their lights, re-geared and reshod for offroad work, and then summarily trained America's first generation of dirt riders. These two bikes were siblings, asleep at the back of a garage for nearly 50 years after their owner bought a new Yamaha RT1 in 1970.

The sleek black 1958 Austin-Healey 100-6 roadster endured a similar slumber — nearly 30 years in a garage after its owner withdrew from the world, closing the garage door and piling boxes and housewares atop and around the car. In its day though, 61 years ago the Big Healey (so-called, as it's big brother to the Bugeye Sprite) was a formidable sports car, with a 2.6-liter, dual-carb inline six, a lightweight aluminum central



body, and few creature comforts. And the little 1964 Allstate trailer? It was purchased new for \$138 at a neighborhood Sears store by a gentleman who used it sparingly before retiring it in the side yard, where it sat for nearly a half century.

It's not unusual, really, that such vehicles would be sidelined, squirreled away or forgotten over time. There must be millions of such cases across America. But what's eerie is the common denominator of these four: Family men just like us bought and used the machines during their prime, and as they aged out of the game, they still retained them — right to the bitter end.

Which raises a question: Why do we connect so indelibly with machines, keeping and protecting them long after they can serve any real purpose for us? Some may call this hoarding, but I call it honoring. And so, in honor of their former owners, car racer friend (and classic motorcycle enthusiast) Randy Pobst, photographer Seth DeDoes and I decided to combine them for a trip to The Quail Motorcycle Gathering. The inspiration for this came from racer John Morton's excellent book *Inside Shelby American*, where he describes using a Jaguar XK150 as a tow vehicle for his Lotus Super Seven race car during the early 1960s. "If a Jag can tow a car trailer, why can't a Healey tow a bike trailer?" I thought. So we hatched a plan, and as Sergeant Friday drawled in *Dragnet*, "The story you are about to hear is true."

Matchless resurrection

In the mid-1960s, a lifelong California motorcyclist retired the aforementioned Matchless G80 desert sleds. A street rider, tourer, trail rider, and Catalina Grand Prix competitor, he had owned many bikes, and more would follow after the Matchlesses were propped against the rear wall, ready for hibernation. This was a fairly ordinary occurrence back then, as old bikes stored easily as better ones came on the market. More extraordinary, though, is that they would not see sunlight again for nearly a half century.

When I first heard about the bikes in 2012, a rumor described some old Matchlesses in a garage near the Pacific Coast. But this one was true and the bikes were indeed real: a 1955 G80 CS and a 1954 G80 CS wearing a Velocette front end. A suspiciously bent frame downtube suggested that long ago, the '54 had ridden into something immovable. Fortunately, a parts bike was included, and it had the correct fork.

Even in their mothballed state so many years on, clearly the bikes were worthy of resurrection and a return to action. Fortunately, a dedicated group of riders organically formed to bring the Matchlesses back to life, while preserving their "as-found" state. But why not clean or restore them at the same time? With every passing year, more bikes get restored, leaving less original examples and fewer portals to real connection with — and understanding of — moto-history. In originality lives the story, and to some, the story is what really matters. Plainly then, these Matchlesses, sitting in a suspended state (some might say decay) for nearly a half century, clearly still fully possess "their story." And so, to me, honoring the owner and his life meant doing what he surely would do, were he still alive and able: (1) Make them run. (2) Go riding. (3) Respect the rest.

For the Matchless Resurrection work party, some brought or shipped parts they had squirreled away. Racer Jimmy Allison from New Mexico sent a Lucas competition magneto for the 1954 model after the original seemed lost for spark. L.A. Matchless guru Don Madden brought factory manuals and a sprocket to juice up the '55's performance. And FIM Land Speed Record holder Ralph Hudson brought a wealth of mechanical knowledge and focus.

What transpired on a cool fall day was like a Matchless Woodstock, except that no one was in it for the money or music or fame. It didn't need explaining, and it didn't need selling; it was just understood that these two old bikes were somehow more than just two old bikes.

At a local shop, we arranged ourselves in little teams





Patina everywhere (left). The G80s after new chains, fluids, tires and more, ready to go. Sadie the retriever approves.

according to our skills and interests. One group changed rotten inner tubes (to be followed later by new Coker-made Firestone ANS “All Non-Skid” 4.00 x 19-inch universal tires), another the Lucas engine and gearbox oil, and another the Regina primary and final-drive chains. But who knew that the magneto sprocket nested on a tapered shaft and could be finessed to the exact right place simply by loosening the sprocket, bolting a degree wheel onto the crank, turning the engine over, and watching the points open? Mechanic Kirk Sloan did.

Sloan likewise checked the lubrication systems and pre-oiled the rocker arms before hanging a little tank of fuel like an IV feed above each bike. He then kicked first one and then the other to life as thick plumes of rust flakes and smoke burst from the old exhausts. Amazingly, magically, it all worked, and then otherwise undisturbed, the G80s both started, ran, rode and shifted, and were essentially ready for the Quail ride.

“History has a texture,” said Peter Hageman, chief judge for the Preservation Class at Pebble Beach, after seeing the ‘55 G80 CS. “A vehicle like this is a historical document of a time gone

by.” If seeing these bikes was like reading such a document, then riding them would be like being in the movie.

Often-Squealy

Compared to the Matchless, getting the Austin-Healey (nicknamed “Often-Squealy” during its heyday) up and running was a Royal Pain in the Arse. Nearly everything containing fluid was gummed up, frozen or inoperable, including the carburetors, water pump, brakes and hydraulic clutch. Miraculously, the long-term owner — an aerospace engineer — had drained the fuel tank prior to storing the car, and it was as clean as the rest of the car was filthy. Furthermore, the tires were cracked and flat-spotted and the muffler badly rusted.

A local English car specialist had most of the needed replacement parts on hand, and while servicing took much time — and learning — the work generally proved straightforward and easy. I also changed the gearbox and differential oil and lubed every Zerk fitting visible on the chassis.

While the Healey now ran well, it was a disaster at anything



On the road: The Often-Squealy tow rig looks perfect parked by the coast.



Randy Pobst (left) and John L. Stein carefully load the '55 G80 aboard the modified '64 Allstate utility trailer.

over 25mph, thanks to the ancient tires. New ones were in order, but I wanted a period look with safe performance, not some fat “restomod” performance tires or skittish original-style bias-ply rubber. Again, Coker Tire offered the exact right solution — Michelin ZXZ 165SR15 radials, whose overall height was within 0.1 inch of the car’s original 5.90 x 15-inch tires. Tubed, fitted and balanced on the wire wheels by a local shop, they turned the Big Healey from a nervous, thumping, crisis-in-waiting to a smooth freeway flier in a couple of hours. So worth doing, and with a fifth Coker-made Michelin on the spare wheel, we struck potential tire problems completely off the worry list while gearing up for the Quail trip.

Trailer queen

I’m fascinated with the old Sears catalogs, from which mail-order customers could buy everything from sugar bowls to shotguns, and music boxes to motorbikes. And trailers. Combing through Craigslist and eBay ads over months unearthed various vintage utility trailers that could haul the G80s, but most had big wheels and a tall bed height, which would tower the bikes above the little car. No good; we needed something small, low and light. It finally surfaced 80 miles away — the '64 Allstate utility trailer with a straight axle, leaf springs, removable rear panel and low-slung 8-inch wheels and tires. Still in the original family, it also carried a coveted California black license plate, and the family also retained the original Manufacturer’s Statement of Origin, purchase contract and title. Deal.

Its only problems: Rotten old tires, and its 5-foot box was too short to accommodate the Matchless. Coker Tire came to the rescue for the third time with a set of repro Cushman 4.00 x 8-inch scooter tires that looked absolutely perfect on the old Allstate. Some angle iron and 3/4-inch plywood extended the trailer length perfectly for the twin G80s. After welding ace John Tilford modified a Toyota Corolla bolt-on trailer hitch to fit the Healey, we were ready to roll.

Kings of the road

Talk about iffy. Loading the two bikes into the trailer, figuring out solid tie-down points, and checking the tongue weight all happened on the fly on a cool, pleasant Wednesday morning. This allowed two days to travel 250 miles along the famed Pacific Coast Highway from SoCal to Carmel, site of

The Quail Motorcycle Gathering. Pobst had parachuted in that morning after testing at Willow Springs International Raceway, and as usual arrived switched on and ready to go. (Where his energy comes from is a mystery; he is racing the Pikes Peak International Hill Climb in a 700-plus-horsepower Dodge SRT Charger Hellcat Widebody as this is written.) With relief, we found the Austin-Healey towed the trailer and its 750-pound cargo with reasonable ease, although I worried as Pobst, aka “The Rocket,” dove into corners, fearing the trailer would overturn.

We had reason to smile as the car’s coolant temperature and oil pressure held. After sailing west for a time, we turned inland to pass Vandenberg Air Force Base — site of West Coast rocket launches — the towns of San Luis Obispo and foggy Morro Bay, and then rejoined the spectacular Pacific coast, home to massive elephant seals, the “Red Triangle” (great white sharks!), plunging rock cliffs and magnificently clean and cool coastal air. An overnight in San Simeon, home of the Hearst Castle, served as a midway point.

“I worried as Pobst, aka ‘The Rocket,’ dove into corners, fearing the trailer would overturn.”

Only the failure of the Healey’s old generator armature spoiled a perfect run, but with an overnight charge, the next day the car’s battery brought us into Carmel and the Quail Lodge in fine style. And miracle of miracles, the electric overdrive even worked, giving the Healey six-banger a nice low rpm at our 45-55mph cruise speed. As expected, the trip had smeared the old car, trailer and bikes with even more grunge, salt and grit than they

already had, making the ensemble probably the dirtiest exhibit ever to arrive at The Quail.

It was remarkable that an old English sports car could be pressed into duty as a tow vehicle — and succeed brilliantly — after such a long time asleep. But a bigger and even more doubtful enterprise was still before us: The Quail Motorcycle Tour.

The Quail Motorcycle Tour

Each year, The Quail Motorcycle Gathering gets more popular. The traditional Friday ride is capped at about 100 riders, but Saturday’s Quail Motorcycle Gathering at The Quail Golf Club had a record 356 motorcycle entries, and would draw some 3,000 spectators. But to enjoy that, we’d have to first convince the G80s to make the 100-mile Tour. Widely known now in its 11th year, the Tour winds through some of Monterey County’s prettiest back roads, starting in this case with Carmel Valley Road, a genial, narrow two-lane winding under the shady oaks



Unloading the '55 the morning of The Quail Motorcycle Tour (left). The '55 G80 CS comes to life, and the ride begins.

for mile after blissful mile. Led by the California Highway Patrol and followed by a sweep crew with a flatbed truck, the ride is plenty safe and secure ... but our old bikes' true condition was unknown, despite our prep and servicing.

After the somewhat surprising success with the Healey tow vehicle, I considered even getting to the "starting line" for The Quail Motorcycle Tour a victory. And on Friday morning, Randy and I off-loaded the bikes from the Allstate trailer, topped up the fuel tanks, geared up, took a breath, and went. We weren't ready for it, but we were at least ready to try.

With Pobst aboard the '55 G80 CS and me aboard the '54, with each passing mile we exchanged amazed glances and exclamations that these bikes were actually doing it. Barely legal in street equipment but properly tagged and insured, they hadn't been ridden more than a block since Woodstock. And the ride was simply incredible, as each explosion inside the G80s' 500cc combustion chambers shoved the bikes forward in a euphoric, steady gallop.

The Matchlesses are simple: Besides the windings and

brush wires inside the magneto, the only other functioning wires on the bikes are the spark plug leads. And with fuel delivery courtesy of gravity and physics' Venturi effect, as long as oil kept circulating through the dry-sump engines, very little could stop us. We hoped. Still, as the miles rushed under our bikes and Carmel Valley Road took us farther and farther south, I was worried that something, eventually, would happen. A friend used to quip, "To avoid future disappointment, set low expectations now." And man, did I ever use that attitude on this ride.

Removing the bikes' big overlay sprockets had brought their gearing back to their original street spec, and so, even equipped with only 4-speed transmissions, the Matchlesses practically loafed along. Fifty miles per hour was an easy speed, and both bikes seemed so understressed that it appeared they could go on forever. My confidence grew at the midpoint of the ride, a rest stop at the Hahn Winery. A nut-and-bolt check there revealed a few fasteners and a chain in need of tightening, and with that corrected it was earplugs back in, jackets and helmets back on, and away.

Another surreal stint brought us to Highway 68, the artery connecting Monterey and the Salinas Valley, which required Tour riders to mix with fast-moving traffic for several miles to Laguna Seca Raceway. Here participants would enjoy several laps on the famous track before returning to the Quail Lodge. But it was not to be for the brave Matchlesses.

As we approached Highway 68 on little River Road, Randy began shouting something about his engine. I couldn't grasp what he was saying, but it didn't matter, as he pulled over just before turning onto the highway. There he explained that he'd been hearing an odd sound, and that the bike was bucking and not pulling well. We pulled over under a shady pepper tree and I began to check things out, starting with the oil level, and then pulling off the side-mounted tappet cover to check — as best as possible with few tools on hand — the valve lash.



After some 80 miles, both bikes gave up at the same time, like brothers in arms.



Probably the grimmest grouping of vehicles to ever park on the Quail greens.

Nothing seemed out of place, and so we spent a half hour trying to push-start the bike. It would run, but it seemed super lean and only wanted to go on full throttle. We decided if that's the hand we were dealt, that's the hand we'd play, and so merged onto Highway 68.

Almost immediately, as if in sympathy with Randy's balky '55 G80, my '54 started to act up. The exhaust note changed to an explosive rattle, as if the exhaust pipe had come adrift of the head. Gradually the bike slowed and the engine — or at least exhaust pipe — seemed to grow hotter and hotter. The noise, flaccid power and heat had me wondering if the magneto timing had slipped and retarded, but I couldn't be sure. A couple of miles down the highway the symptoms only got worse and I pulled onto a side road, where I found Randy already waiting, his bike also done.

Both Matchless had expired together; like brothers in arms, they had lived, fought and died as one. That was all. We rode back to The Quail Lodge in the chase truck with the bikes tied down behind us, appreciative of their effort but disappointed in having almost — but not quite — made the entire Tour. And to any other riders who needed the sweep truck helping us instead: Sincere apologies!

In 20/20 hindsight, the woe hamstringing Randy's '55 was nothing more than a loose carburetor top, which allowed extra air into the engine, leaning the mixture to an unworkable level. As for the '54, the mechanical compression release that opens the exhaust valve to ease starting had stuck; this kept the valve open which lowered compression and sent combustion straight into the exhaust pipe. Given time to troubleshoot we surely would have found and corrected both issues roadside, but with the afternoon escaping and the chase truck waiting, we simply had to cut it off.

Let us gather together

Back at the Quail Golf Club,

attendees at Saturday's Motorcycle Gathering were likely shocked (or amused, quizzical, irate?) to find the road-weary black Austin-Healey, Allstate trailer and Matchless reunited and on display, vestiges of the great life and times of three gentlemen who preceded us in their moto-passion. One was Marcie Lawwill, the daughter of 1969 AMA Grand National Champion Mert Lawwill, who had spotted the ensemble with her friends, and wanted a closer look.

With hundreds of machines and thousands of people to see in a short six hours, admittedly I didn't check on the rig much during the day. But once, I was astonished to find quite a crowd around it. Then as I drew closer, the reason was clear: *On Any Sunday*, Baja 1000 and ISDT star Malcolm Smith was studying the bikes. It seems Malcolm is a Matchless G80 CS fan, having raced one early in his career, just prior to stepping aboard first Greeves and then the Husqvarna dirt bikes that led him to worldwide success and fame. In addition, Malcolm used to own a Big Healey, and was intrigued that his mechanical past was represented all in one display. And so, this simple act by a humble and heroic man had drawn the crowd.

Along with many Husqvarnas, Malcolm keeps a collection of Matchlesses in his Riverside, California, dealership, Malcolm Smith Motorsports. He was kind enough to sign the bare aluminum tank of the '54 at The Quail, and since Malcolm seemed to like the G80s, I offered to deliver them to his dealership the next week, so they could join other bikes on display in his collection. He agreed, and so they are there today, fresh (so to speak) from their Austin-Healey road trip and The Quail Motorcycle Tour.

While Randy Pobst and I already have future plans for these two veteran desert sleds, I like where they are presently just fine. In fact, I can't think of a better place to honor their history — and that of their previous owner. Thanks, Malcolm! **MC**



Malcolm Smith and the G80s on display at his dealership.



A rider on an Indian FTR 1200/1200S motorcycle is shown from the side, riding on a dirt track. The rider is wearing a black leather suit and a helmet. The motorcycle is black with red accents on the frame. The background is a blurred dirt track with green grass and trees in the distance.

INDIAN FTR 1200/1200 S

Born on the dirt, built for the street

Story by Alan Cathcart

Photos by Felix Romero and Ula Serra

Every so often a manufacturer conceives a new model that's unlike anything anyone did previously — and in doing so invents a new kind of motorcycle. Think BMW with its dual-purpose GS models, Ducati with the Monster or Yamaha with the original Ténéré — all of them so immediately and hugely successful that they ended up being copied by other manufacturers, and proved to be prototypes for a new generic type of bike. Now, with its new FTR 1200 Street Tracker, Indian may well have joined that illustrious club.

That's not to say that nobody else ever tried to build a volume production street legal version of an American oval-track racer before — just that nobody yet showed how this could be done in a modern context, while getting it as indisputably right as America's oldest motorcycle manufacturer has now done with this new model. OK, Harley tried once before with its flawed and hence short-lived XR1200 back in 2008, but nobody else, until now. The FTR 1200 made its global debut last October at Intermot, and is now in production — with initial 2019 manufacturing projections already doubled in response to massive worldwide customer demand. Initially, this will exclusively be built at Indian's U.S. plant at Spirit Lake, Iowa — but later this summer a second assembly line will kick off at the massive factory in Opole, Poland, where Indian's parent company Polaris Corp. has been making offroad vehicles since 2014. This will enable Indian to assemble complete knockdown kits of bikes manufactured in Iowa then shipped to Poland for completion, to hold prices down by circumventing the 31-percent EU taxes currently applied to complete motorcycles entirely manufactured in the U.S. as an anti-Trump measure, which are set to rise to 66 percent in June 2021 — well, unless someone blinks first.

Moreover, if anyone's entitled to pro-

duce today's definitive Street Tracker, it's Indian, thanks to its current dominance of American Flat Track (AFT) racing. The 2017-2018 seasons saw Indian immediately spank all other brands on its return to competition after a 70-year absence, with its FTR 750 winning 17 of the 18 races held in the 2018 AFT season, thus earning the No. 1 plate in successive years courtesy of Jared Mees.

Clearly inspired by the FTR 750 in both styling and engineering, the base model 2019 FTR 1200 will cost \$13,499 in the U.S., while the uprated FTR 1200 S starts at \$15,499. The FTR 1200 is only available in black with a black frame, and has a round analog speedometer with an LCD screen for seven different data readings, including tachometer, fuel gauge, gear indicator, mileage, etc. Meanwhile, the 1200 S has a full-color, 4.3-inch customizable LCD touch screen digital dash, with phone connectivity and Bluetooth for easy mobile device pairing. This also delivers access exclusively on the S-variant to Rain, Road and Sport riding modes (the standard model just has the Road mapping, but is still ride-by-wire), plus traction control, anti-wheelie and ABS. While the FTR 1200 S shares the same Sachs suspension hardware with the stock bike — a 43mm upside-down fork set at a 26.3-degree rake with 130mm of trail, matched to an offset cantilever



monoshock, with both yielding a massive 5.9 inches of wheel travel at either end — this suspension package offers full adjustment of preload, compression and rebound damping at both ends only on the S-version, with preload and rebound adjustment only on the FTR 1200.

The easy-to-use dash allows you to swipe between riding modes and other settings on the go via a gloved finger — all changes are intuitive, and don't require you to close the throttle to confirm them. It's also extremely bright — I had no trouble reading it in California sunshine, which is definitely not the case with some other such dashes, and the display is customizable so riders can choose from different configurations for the speedo and gauges. The whole operating system has been well thought out and is simple to use — kudos to Indian for getting this right first time.



2019 INDIAN FTR 1200 S

Engine: 73ci (1,203cc) liquid-cooled DOHC, 60-degree V-twin, 4.016in x 2.898in (102mm x 73.6mm) bore and stroke, 12.5:1 compression ratio, 123hp @ 8,250rpm
Top speed: N/A
Fueling: Two 60mm Mikuni throttle bodies
Transmission: 6-speed, chain final drive
Electrics: 12v, electronic ignition
Frame/wheelbase: Tubular steel trellis frame, engine as stressed member/60in (1,524mm)
Suspension: Inverted telescoping forks front, fully adjustable monotube internal floating piston shock rear
Brakes: Dual 320mm rotors w/four-piston Nissin calipers front, single 265mm rotor with two-piston caliper rear
Tires: 120/70 x 19in front, 150/70 x 18in rear
Weight (wet): 565lb (234kg)
Seat height: 33in (838mm)
Fuel capacity: 3.4gal (12.9ltr)
Price: 1200: \$13,499, 1200 S: \$15,499, 1200 S RR: \$16,999

The touch part of the screen controls a full Bosch stability control system with six-axis inertial sensor and those multiple riding modes.

The 1200 S is available in Red over Steel Gray or Titanium Metallic over Thunder Black Pearl, each with a black



The 4.3-inch LCD touch screen digital dash (left) is customizable, well thought out and easy to use.

frame. The black, red and white bike with the red frame you see here is the range-topping FTR 1200 S RR (for Race Replica). These FTR models are the real deal, and will surely usher in street trackers from other manufacturers, even without such a history of race track success as Indian. Fueled by its racing sister's two seasons of dirt track dominance, the new Indian has earned the tag line that it was "born on the dirt, built for the street," and that rings true when you ride it.

On the road

I had the chance on the press launch to spend a 120-mile day riding a couple of these models through the canyons of Southern California northwest of Los Angeles, along such legendary highways





as Mulholland Drive and Stunt Road. These provide a stern test of any motorcycle's performance attributes.

This is the first of several future Indian models to be powered by the company's all-new liquid-cooled 1,203cc 8-valve 60-degree V-twin engine with chain-driven dual overhead cams, making its debut in the FTR 1200. Measuring 102mm x 73.6mm, and delivering a claimed 123 horsepower at 8,250rpm, with 87ft/lb of torque peaking at 5,900rpm, this third Indian engine platform under Polaris ownership following on from the Chief and Scout was created practically in conjunction with the FTR 750 which inspired it.

In its FTR 1200 application the 60-degree V-twin's flat torque curve ensures a progressive, predictable power delivery with loads of low-end punch and flexibility. It features a high (by U.S. standards) 12.5:1 compression ratio from its high flow cylinder heads, and its closed-loop EFI features twin big-choke 60mm Mikuni throttle bodies to optimize throttle response, and top end power delivery.

The FTR 1200 features a tubular steel trellis frame in which the engine is mounted as a fully stressed component, with an aluminum rear subframe. That long tubular swingarm pivots in the crankcases to operate the side-mounted Sachs mono-shock without the benefit of a link.

Climbing aboard the tall 33-inch dual

seat (it's that high to make space for the 3.4 gallon fuel tank beneath it), reveals an upright but very commanding riding stance that's very comfy. You feel positioned quite far forward in the bike, which helps to load up the front wheel with your body weight even while sitting upright, with very little sense of weight on your arms — it's a really untiring stance even when you start riding hard, with the wide, flat, one-piece flat track-styled ProTaper aluminum handlebar which is

"Expect this Indian to rival the Ducati Monster 1200 as the commuter of choice for those in a hurry!"

nicely pulled back towards you, delivering more leverage than just about any other current street bike I've ridden. Despite its conservative steering geometry and the rangy wheelbase, the FTR 1200 proved to be an ideal canyon-carver, with completely predictable albeit pretty quick steering, which never threatened to become unstable, even trail braking into a tight hairpin. The footrests are set quite far back, resulting in a distinctive and really comfortable riding position, with a great view ahead over traffic in front of you

— expect this Indian to rival the Ducati Monster 1200 as the commuter of choice for those in a hurry!

Light my fire

Thumb the starter, and the offbeat lilt issuing through the stock flat track-inspired 2-1-2 stainless steel exhaust's stacked silencers on the right side of the bike is necessarily quite muted (since it is Euro 4 compliant). As a 60-degree 8-valve V-twin, this engine is rather tall, without the space between the cylinders as on any 90-degree L-twin Ducati to position the throttle bodies between the cylinder vee, while providing appropriate airbox volume. Indian has fixed this on the FTR 1200 by moving the fuel tank beneath the seat, which lowers the center of gravity and delivers increased space for the airbox to be positioned directly above the twin 60mm Mikuni throttle bodies, beneath what looks like the fuel tank but isn't. It also helps centralize the mass of the bike, in pursuit of more agile handling and easier steering. The plastic covers creating the illusion of the false tank can be swapped for different colors, a key element in convenient customization.

The 19-inch front/18-inch rear 10-spoke cast aluminum wheels are shod with Dunlop DT3-R radial tires, especially created for this model complete with a look-alike Flat Track tread pattern. They're exclusive to Indian for the first year of production. "We originally wanted a 19/19



The range-topping Indian FTR 1200 S RR (left) and the bike that inspired it, the Indian FTR 750 race bike (right).

wheel size, like they have in AFT racing,” says Indian’s Senior Industrial Designer Rich Christoph, who was responsible for creating the FTR 1200 and also styled the FTR 750. “But we couldn’t get a suitable 19-inch rear tire, so we tried 17/17, and it just didn’t look right. So 19/18 gives us the look, as well as performance.”

In faster turns, the FTR feels very reas-

suring, thanks to that conservative geometry, which doesn’t heavy up the steering unduly, and nor does the ProTaper handlebar wobble even slightly in your hands at speed, as on some naked bikes with imperfect steering geometry. But in fast 70mph sweeping turns I noticed it was always better to go back a gear to fifth, and drive through these on at least part-

throttle, so as to make the Indian hug the line without ever washing out the front wheel even just a little.

And you can indeed use that wide handlebar to hustle the FTR 1200 through a series of tighter, slower corners both quickly and safely — oh, and entertainingly, too. The Sachs suspension has been expertly dialed in, and you’re very

America’s First Superbike: 1936 Indian Sport Scout

The Indian Sport Scout introduced in 1934 was America’s first Superbike. The early 1930s had seen the near-collapse of bike racing in the USA, forcing Indian and Harley-Davidson to stop supporting large, professional factory race teams, owing to dwindling track numbers and reduced budgets.

Faced with this crisis, the AMA created Class C racing in 1934 as the basis for all competition. The rules allowed 750cc sidevalve motors, with OHV engines limited to 500cc, but a maximum compression ratio of only 7.5:1 prevented these being competitive against the 50-percent bigger sidevalves. Riders had to present proof of ownership at sign-up, to prevent the factories entering tricked-out works racers, so Indian did the next best thing, and produced the Sport Scout. Selling for an affordable \$300 with a 744cc dry-sump 42-degree V-twin sidevalve engine, its bolted-up diamond-type frame led to a quite high 385 pounds dry weight. With aluminium cylinder heads and cast-iron barrels, and a separate 3-speed gearbox with hand-shift, it employed British-style girder forks which delivered a compact 56.5-inch wheelbase, and predictable handling via its stock 18-inch wheels.

On the Sport Scout’s debut, Rody Rodenberg won the February 1935 Jacksonville, Florida, National 200-miler, the forerunner of the Daytona 200. Kicking off the inaugural season of Class C racing, the Sport Scout swiftly became a versatile and competitive machine adaptable to road racing, dirt track or hill-climbs. The Sport Scout was a fast and reliable ride, and it dominated the early days of Class C racing. Rodenberg went undefeated for three and a half years on his Sport Scout.

The most famous of the Scout’s many victories came when Ed Kretz won the inaugural Daytona 200 on the combined beach and highway course in 1937. Kretz went on to race his Sport Scout ultra-

successfully, even into postwar competition — though by then Harley had finally overtaken the performance of the Wigwam factory’s Class C racer. Indian responded in 1948 with the Project 648 “Big Base” version of the Sport Scout, a limited edition 50-off homologation special permitted under the AMA’s revised Class C rules. This had a completely new engine loosely based on the previous model’s, sold at loss-leading prices with the intent of restoring Indian’s supremacy. His Project 648 duly took Floyd Emde to victory in the 1948 Daytona 200, and it went on to gain No. 1 plates for Bill Tuman and Bobby Hill well into the 1950s, despite increasing competition from the OHC Nortons and OHV BSAs and Triumphs. Ultimately, it was only the demise of the Indian marque itself, with the end of production at the Springfield factory in 1953, which ended the Sport Scout’s glorious competition career. There would be a 64-year hiatus before Indian returned to competition with the FTR 750, which duly achieved dirt track dominance, and in celebration of that, spun off the FTR 1200 for the street. — Alan Cathcart



AHRMA cofounder Will Harding’s 1936 Indian Sport Scout racer.

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The 73-cubic-inch (1,203cc) V-twin puts out a claimed 123 horsepower @ 8,250rpm. It's no slouch.

grateful for that massive 150mm of wheel travel at either end, but especially for the compliant cantilever rear shock over bumpy back roads ravaged by the Malibu fires last winter. Coupled with the centralized mass delivered by the architecture of the bike, the Indian changes direction pretty effortlessly — it's a really nice handling package, and one that's curiously relaxing to ride through twisting mountain roads, thanks to the upright stance and the heaps of leverage delivered by the wider bar. It's easy to get into a rhythm on this bike.

"We knew this bike was going to be ridden primarily on highways, and on curvy roads, so we optimized our suspension to be at home doing that," says Senior International Product Manager Ben Lindaman. "But we also made sure it's capable of taking on more than just asphalt if you want it to — it can soak up rough surfaces, cobblestones and speed bumps, and while it's not a dirt bike, it can handle some light offroad use as well thanks to the long-travel suspension."

The twin 320mm front discs are gripped



by radially mounted four-piston Brembo Monoblock calipers, and are brilliantly effective as always in stopping the 565 pounds (wet) of motorcycle that the FTR 1200 represents, with good feedback. And taking a handful of front brake while leaned over doesn't make the Indian sit up and understeer off course, as is sometimes the case with bikes like this with a lot of trail dialed in. It's a very reassuring ride. The FCC slipper clutch included as standard on both versions has a dual-action ramp system, so that it self-tightens during acceleration, and slips on reverse torque, allowing light springs to be fitted which makes the FTR 1200 a bike that's completely at home in traffic or city use, since the light lever action

won't cramp your left hand up in riding around town. The slipper clutch has been set up to provide minimal engine braking, though, so the Brembos have to earn their keep.

Bosch ABS is of course standard, and switchable on the S-model while Bosch also provides the ECU complete with ride-by-wire. Fueling is excellent, making the FTR 1200 engine a modern, capable and refined power unit, which it's a pleasure to ride with. Alongside a wide range of 40-plus dedicated accessories that's available from the first, even the base model FTR 1200 has cruise control as standard as well as a USB port. Furthermore, up front is a distinctive LED headlight, with LED turn signals and tail

The base FTR 1200 is only available in black with a black frame, but it's a full \$2,000 cheaper than the FTR 1200 S.



"It's a really great engine design, which has so much potential for use in other models."

light, with the Indian motif illuminated to tell people what just passed them.

But the star of the show is that great engine, which thanks to the gear-driven counterbalancer fitted has zero undue vibration up until 7,000rpm, when you start to feel a subdued thrum only through the footrests. But that's it, right up to the 9,000rpm soft-action (because ride-by-wire) limiter. Yet this fabulous engine delivers a great sense of involvement, as well as heaps of power and torque. The light crank allows the engine to pick up revs fast for an immediate response that verges on being snatchy in Sport mode — I preferred the Road settings which still delivered thrilling acceleration, making the FTR a very aggressive flat-track-inspired hooligan bike, if you want it to be. Yet there's also a really flat torque curve delivering power both progressively and predictably, with loads of low-end punch, and super flexibility. The threshold for serious power is 3,000rpm, and I found

by shifting up at 7,000 revs I'd be right back in the really meaty part of the torque curve peaking 1,000 revs lower, which doesn't however fall off much beyond that peak. It's a really great engine design, which has so much potential for use in other models.

So unless you really want to get it on by selecting Sport riding mode on the FTR 1200 S — with that vivid throttle response, fierce acceleration and strong power that's super invigorating — it almost doesn't matter which gear you throw at the FTR 1200, it delivers.

There's no question about it — the FTR 1200 will catapult Indian into the front line of global brands in the next 12 months. It has immediate recognition thanks to Rich Christoph's distinctive styling which totally hits the bull's-eye, yet is quite unlike anything else in the marketplace — not even the Ducati Monster 1200 it'll inevitably be compared with. This is a totally versatile performance

motorcycle — what the Italians call a *moto totale* — which is fairly priced for the level of performance it offers, and in real world terms it's both huge fun as well as practical to ride. The pseudo-AFT Dunlop tires are an acquired taste, and are aimed more at looking authentic rather than outright performance on tarmac, and I'd like to try the FTR fitted with a set of Michelin Scorchers which conveniently come in a 120/70 ZR19 front size. But apart from that I can only praise Ben Lindaman and his team for creating this authentic and compelling new model, which is so enjoyable and impressive to ride. The first in an all-new family of models powered by this superb engine, it augurs well for the future for America's oldest brand — a future that we should all pay close attention to. This is an American manufacturer whose future will evidently include making European-style bikes for a global market — but designed and developed in the USA. So what's next? **MC**

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PILLION TO PILOT

A new point of view

Story by Jean Denney
Photos by Richard Backus

Moving from the two-up position to piloting is a reality for an increasing number of women participating in recreational motorcycling.

I've been riding pillion for more than two years now. Granted I was a reluctant passenger at first for two good reasons: fear and safety. I'd seen too many younger motorcyclists roar up alongside my car in thick traffic, no helmet, no gloves, wearing shorts and flip-flops. This seemed unnecessarily reckless to me, but this was before I agreed to take a short trek on a vintage motorcycle through the countryside on a bright day in May. Two things happened that day. I fell in love with the 360-degree view with what I call smell-o-roma of a rural ride, and the comfortable, albeit somewhat measured pace of an older, more tempered machine. To my surprise, I loved both. I've ridden pillion on the gravel back roads of Kansas, the challenging streets of San Francisco, and the gorgeous coast and hills of California. I've been passenger on a 1973 BMW R75/5, a 1983 Laverda RGS 1000, a 1980 Moto Guzzi V50 Monza and a 2016 Ducati Scrambler. My pilot was patient and enthusiastic, provided all my gear, and explained all the quirks of makes and models that made the ride not only fun, but gave me a great deal to focus on while moving; I listened for and

physically sensed those details in action. It was a rich introduction that became a serious hook. I'm told that I actually squealed with delight that first day. Motorcycling is a sensorial experience like no other.

Safety awareness for serious fear

If I enjoyed riding pillion so much, why bother learning to pilot my own bike? My very first thoughts of basic motorcycle training were really about safety. I thought it would be a good idea for me to know more about what is happening for my pilot. I believed that increasing my knowledge and awareness might actually increase our safety. Facing the fear of what could go wrong and understanding what can be done to minimize negative results just made good sense to me whether or not I actually enjoyed piloting on my own. Plus, I was just flat-out curious if I could do it.

My curiosity was paired with healthy fear. I'm 56 years old and have two children. I am a single parent. Like a lot of women my age, I have been shaped by a particular cultural influence regarding gender roles that complicate my psychological and social perspective. In other words, my fears are real; financial costs with loss of the ability to work given an accident, negative social judgement, and shaming gender expectations are all present for female riders. Yes, culture is changing, but many people do not respect women motorcyclists and stereotype them instead. Yet, my biggest fear was failure, any kind of failure, from not finishing the course, to dumping the bike. Over the course of two years riding two-up however, I processed a great deal of both real and



The group on course. I wonder why my bike — a dark blue 2010 Yamaha XV250 (far left) — had no mirrors?

Look down, go down: Though counter-intuitive at first, keeping head and eyes up, while sensing good placement of hands and feet, was best.



irrational fear within a new community of men and women who love motorcycles. The positive and accepting conversations at most rides and events won out. Additionally, I was noticing that the opportunity to face raw physical fear each time I got in the saddle was helping me release a certain maternal fear that had taken hold of my guts since giving birth. It's a basic fear that I think most parents feel, quietly humming beneath the surface as they watch their helpless children navigate a sometimes perilous world. The opportunity to be on a motorcycle was bringing me back into myself and helping me get grounded as an individual again. This was exciting and felt important.

Choosing a women's-only course

I chose a course that was open to women only, with a curriculum developed by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation. Aware that my fears were well founded, I wanted to remove as much stress and distraction from my learning experience as possible. My previous work experience includes 30 years as a professional dancer/athlete and dance educator. I am a perfectionist and being in a large group was not a good idea. I also wanted the company of other women to learn more about those of us who are in the minority of the motorcycle world. Our subset is growing and supporting this community is important as well. I am so glad that I chose this course.

There were five women the first night and our instructor, Mike Adams, was obviously not a woman. What was not surprising are Mike's credentials: veteran police officer and motorcade

specialist. My classmates were all between the ages of 39 and 60, and our first discussions were about why we were there and what we feared most. We all were experienced passengers, but not all of us had piloted a two-wheeled vehicle before. Valerie, Chandra and Melissa had actually maneuvered bikes once upon a time, but abandoned participation while raising kids believing the sport too dangerous. Bonnie and I had no piloting experience. The universal fear of being hit by a car is likely a conscious fear for all motorcyclists, and it was for each of us, too. This was expertly addressed by Mike beginning with basic awareness and preparedness. He assured us that safety was in our hands and that mental focus and a relaxed yet alert attitude are mandatory first steps toward a safer ride. Mike always brought us back to this point; the onus of safety is on the motorcyclist first. Turns out, we were each afraid of something — the bike roaring out from under us, falling, speeding out of control — and therefore we were all on the same page. Mike assured us that we would learn together and proceed slowly after each skill became comfortable.

We worked in teams to read, review and test through the first few chapters of the basic rider course handbook in preparation for the real deal the next morning. FINE-C, Friction Zone, SSS, braking, shifting, T-CLOCS, etc., all crammed into four hours. I drove off that evening exhausted and searched for a store that was open at 11 p.m. in order to buy a pair of cheap, lace-up boots. Turns out, high-top sneakers won't do. Piloting requires decent footwear.



Bonnie (left) executed great turns, while Chandra (above) had the most riding experience of the group coming into the course.

Pavement, power and patience

Early the next morning we gathered in a large parking lot. The bikes were all ready for us: two Yamaha Star XV250s and three Honda Rebels. We worked to actualize what we reviewed the evening before. Slow was the key. I liked the curriculum and method for the course as each new skill built upon the previous skill and confidence naturally grew for each of us. I was actually amazed that the friction zone yielded a great deal of control. I was relieved to be able to shift smoothly and brake well. We were all pretty elated to be moving, and stopping successfully. My biggest issue was that I looked down instead of up and I neglected to scan ahead. Mike was very patient with me and simply repeated himself over and over. Turns were a problem. Oddly enough, turning broadly with more speed was easier than turning tightly. Unfortunately, remembering to square up after a stop became a problem for most of us. We lost one student the first day due to an awkward fall and injured throttle elbow. We all got sober quickly after this and our classroom work that afternoon turned to safety margins and risk offset as well as strategies for common riding situations. Again, the fear crept back into our minds.

"With each outing,
my fear lessens and my
confidence increases."

Deluge and determination

The next day was not so great. I dumped my bike, twice. Both times because I neglected to square up after stopping to watch my classmates. I also became very frustrated with figure 8 turns and hard angle turns. I just couldn't keep inside the lines. Mike picked up on my frustration. His admonitions were all about deep breathing, keeping my head up and taking my time. Finally, it occurred to me that what was happening was mental fatigue. Piloting requires a great deal of mental alertness, more than I experience driving a car. Mike was right. I was new at this, yet expecting it all to be second nature somehow. If I didn't want to get hurt, I needed to pace myself. The pressure was on. I knew that by the end of the morning's riding session I would have to execute all the exercises within the context of testing. I needed to relax.

Just then, it started to rain, then pour. Mike gathered us up and said we would just keep going. He said the rain was an opportunity for real confidence building. We all performed well; sweeping curves, obstacles, quick stops, all in standing water. By the time the testing was to start we had already been through the worst of it. When Mike explained the rules for the exams and how points are deducted from your score, my heart sank. I had to stay in the lines, not put a foot down, and definitely keep upright. It wasn't pretty, but I made it. Bonnie was the most in control and could navigate those tight boxes like a champ. Chandra did everything well, and Melissa rode consistently and made us all laugh with her self-deprecating humor and positive team spirit. We made it through day two and on-the-bike testing.

Back in the classroom, we reviewed our handbook, discussed emergencies, special situations and rider impairment then we took our written test. Before leaving, we reviewed our piloting scores and test results with rider coach Mike. We all passed, but we were all impressed by how much practice we would need in order to master the basics. It was clear

to all of us that a second course would be wise, because there is nothing like real experience to make you pay attention and in two short days we came to understand how poor habits are hard to break. I know this from my dance training. Anything can go wrong during a performance and the only safeguard against injury is muscle memory. I attended beginner dance classes to practice basic techniques every single day for just this reason. The acronyms and exercises of the Basic Rider Course work in the same way. The course proved very productive for me, and I doubt I'd be out on my own without it.

Head up and seated well

These days I put my course lessons to work as I tootle around town on a 1976 Suzuki GT185. This is the perfect bike for me right now. It's small, upright, and easy to manage. If there is anything I'd change for a women's-only course, it would be the bikes. I do understand that most facilities offer



Coach Mike Adams (seated) explains the test sequence to (from left to right) Chandra, Bonnie, Melissa and Jean.

what is available and many of the bikes are sold at cost or donated to course schools. That said, I did not like the cruiser style of the motorcycle I learned on. The saddle placement and angle was relaxed instead of alert and I did not feel aligned enough for quick responses. I felt sunken and had trouble accessing the rear brake as it felt too far forward, not directly under my knee and hip in a way that allowed for quick, solid movement. Likewise, my reach felt less mobile. I could easily get both feet on the ground, and this was perhaps most important. The standard shape of the Suzuki GT185 allows me to line up head over ribs, ribs over hips, hips in a nice angle to my knee and foot. I can put my feet firmly on the ground as well.

With each outing, my fear lessens and my confidence

increases. Soon I'll be one of the nearly 20 percent of pilots who are female and own a motorcycle. While I still love to ride pillion, piloting is a new thrill. It feels good to come to terms with some fears as I age and prove to myself that I can create a new worldview in spite of cultural norms. I like to think that I'm one of many women out there changing perceptions about age, ability and gender. Women pilots offer differing motivations for wanting to own and operate motorcycles. My guess is that these are just as diverse as most male motivations for the same activity. Fortunately, there are different machines for different motivations and routes to match each one of these. I am excited to explore, however slowly, the many roads ahead. When I'm ready, I might just wave to you. **MC**



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BULLETS OVER BHUTAN

Riding Royal Enfields through the quiet land

Story and photos by Robert Smith

In 1997, I joined one of the first motorcycle tours of the remote Himalayan kingdom.

Dusk was slipping into night as our motorcycle caravan turned off the single-lane Bumthang Valley road. The Enfield's pale headlight just picked out the way ahead — a narrow, climbing stream bed. Standing on the pegs, I held second gear and pointed the front wheel uphill. The Bullet slogged patiently up the slope as the back wheel scrabbled for traction.

The Bumthang festival started that evening. In a plowed field, under a

full mountain moon, maybe 300 excited Bhutanese were milling around. We were told we'd see firewalking, and I envisioned red-robed, chanting monks walking barefoot over beds of glowing coals. Instead, a steel frame like a soccer goal was draped with branches and leaves. When this was set alight, everyone ran underneath the flames, laughing. For this I travelled 13,000 miles?

From the crowd staggered a dancer in a grotesque animal mask, wearing a long white robe and a crimson wig. Another, bearing more than a passing resemblance to Jimi Hendrix, lurched forward waving a pole decorated with streamers above his head. The two began a charging, cavorting dance as

the spellbound audience swayed back and forth.

"They're hypnotized," said Dorji, our Bhutanese guide. They looked stoned to me ...

The ride

Our expedition began in fall 1997 on the northern plains of India in Siliguri, West Bengal; and though late in the year, the air was warm and dry. Led by Himalayan Roadrunners' Rob Callander, we rolled our Enfields out of the dirt parking lot of Sinclair's Hotel on to NH10 heading to Jaigaon at the Bhutanese border — and into the chaotic frenzy of an Indian highway. We were five bikes on the road, plus Himalayan Roadrunners' support

The pass at Yutong La separates the Trongsa and Bumthang valleys. Bare, basic cafés provide a welcome break for coffee and snacks.

truck with a spare bike, and Gyan, our mechanic.

The tarmac was broken and cratered. Untidy storefronts displaying spare, grimy goods lined the road. Women (usually women, sometimes children—never men) carried untidy bundles of firewood on their heads. Ferocious trucks blasted through the tiny villages scattering goats, chickens and children. The only rule of the road here: Might is right.

In Jaigaon, our passports were stamped and processed, and we rode under a brightly painted arch into Bhutan, and a new town, Puntsholing. There was more paperwork to do before we were free to go, the process slowed by the fact that it was a national holiday, the king's 43rd birthday.

The difference from India was dramatic. Gone was the untidy scrimmage of Jaigaon, replaced by order and tranquility. Faces that had been darkly Caucasian became almond-eyed Mongoloid — most Bhutanese are eth-

nically Tibetan. By royal mandate, citizens wore their national dress as they went about their business: the gho, a tailored, toga-like cloak belted at the waist for men; and the kira, a full-length robe pinned at the shoulder for women. We're appointed a guide, Dorji, who will travel with us as interpreter and "fixer."

Topographically, Bhutan is a staircase rising from the Indo-Gangetic plain into the Himalayas, climbing 20,000 feet in less than 150 miles. From the strip of tropical terai in the south to the northern peaks, there was only one valley flat enough for an airstrip. So leaving Puntsholing we soon

began to climb. As we switched along the mountainsides on a narrow tarmac track, grassland gave way to scrub, while pines and dwarf conifers clung to the cliffs. We climbed into a cloud that condensed inside my visor. Through the misty haze, the meandering rivers on the plain below appeared like luminous golden ribbons in a steam bath. The Enfield's breathing became asthmatic: Throttle wide in the thin air, a rasping gulp accompanied each intake stroke.

At Gedu, less than 50 miles from the border, we'd already climbed almost 7,000 feet and it was cold. A plywood shack was marked, surprisingly, "café." We encircled a wood fire in the corner





1997 Enfield Bullet 500, made "Like a Gun" just as it was in 1956.

of a bare, dirt-floor room, warming our hands on tiny cups of hot, sweet Nescafé. We drew a crowd, of course. A circle of grubby, quietly curious children surrounded us and the bikes. And — unlike India where the cry "one rupee, one rupee," followed us everywhere — not one asked for money.

We were riding the East-West Highway (also known as the Lateral Road) a roughly paved single-lane strip of broken tarmac that rambled along the mountainsides — and not a motorhome anywhere. Snaggly, snow-covered peaks jumped out around each bend like crooked fangs; vast, rambling, brightly painted, low-rise buildings called "dzongs" (a sort of combination temple, monastery and municipal hall) were tacked on the hillsides.

The Indian army helped build this road to aid troop movement. Their presence in Bhutan bolsters the country against an over-the-mountains invasion from Chinese-occupied Tibet. And the U.N. quietly maintains a presence of its own to stifle any Indian colonial ambitions.

As we broke through above the cloud, the terrain became flatter, opening into broad alpine valleys. The road forked and we swooped along the side of a narrow chasm, white water crashing below. The canyon walls widened and became shallower, opening into a broad valley of neatly laid rice fields. This was the Paro Valley, home to Bhutan's second-largest community and its only airport. Still it was little more than a clutch of two-story houses

lining a short, broad dirt street with an open storm drain.

Rob hustled us toward one of the houses. Painted beams pierced the stucco walls. Above the second floor, a plywood-sheet roof was weighted down with rocks. The narrow windows had no glass: Wood shutters hung from the frames. Near the door of the dark, bare room was a counter with a sparse arrangement of candy, pastries and spirits. A wooden bench lined one wall, a rough table in front of it. It was impossible to age the faces around us, teeth gaping behind their sun-leathered smiles. We warmed ourselves with Special Courier Indian whisky and freshly steamed momos — meat-filled pastry shells not unlike empanadas.

Each night, we stayed at basic, but quite adequate, government guest houses; and while we ate dinner, Gyan, our mechanic, tended to the Enfields. The food — the kind of mystery meat and vegetables they serve to first-world visitors in developing countries — was plain but filling, and richer, I'm sure, than the rice and chilies most Bhutanese subsist on.



Left to right: Himalayan Roadrunners' Rob Callander, guide Dorji, RDS, mechanic Gyan, Phil, Graham, guide Charles Gray.



Bhutan's Himalayan slopes provide scenery reminiscent of the European Alps.



Each day, we would ride winding, crudely paved trails climbing to a high pass and back down to a new valley. Thimpu, the capital, offered the nearest thing to a city. But apart from the grandeur of the royal palace and the dzong, the remainder of the city would hardly rate as a suburb in the U.S. We reach the center of the country at the Bumthang Valley and its festival before turning west again. The eastern border would have taken us into Assam, India, where at that time attacks by insurgents had made it dangerous to travel.

Every small settlement had its rustic café. In Thinleygang, it was run by a slender, pale Nepalese girl wearing glasses — the only person I saw wearing specs in Bhutan. In Hongtso, the young Tibetan refugee who brought our tea had long black hair tied back, and shiny black streaks painted across her eyelids. The baby balanced on her hip was not hers, she explained, but her sister's. Sure. She told us she was leaving soon for Kathmandu to find a husband.

The king

On his birthday each year, King Jigme Singye Wangchuck toured the country with his four wives (all were sisters) in a fleet of Land Cruisers. The King was deeply revered by his people, and any who lived along the route gathered by the roadside for the procession.

Our tour tracked the royal entourage across the country, and every tiny village on our route had been spruced up: Gaily decorated arches spanned the road; chortens (burial sites) and dzongs were freshly painted; and prayer flags snapped in the stiff mountain breeze. We seemed to be only just ahead of the king: And the roadside throng, unsure whether we were part of the festivities or not, cheered and waved anyway. Not wanting to disappoint them, we waved back. Dorje advised us of the proper etiquette if we did see the king, but when it finally happened, I was unprepared.

We were near Yutong La, one of the highest motorable passes in Bhutan at 11,635 feet. A shiny Royal Blue



Mahindra Jeep of the Bhutanese police bounced toward us. The wailing siren and flashing red light told us to clear the road.

Spooked, I stepped on the Enfield's brake pedal and skidded into a patch of mud, stalling the engine. Bhutan's hereditary monarch appeared over the rise in his white Toyota Land Cruiser. Leaning the bike against my leg, I tore at my helmet, forgetting I was still wearing my Ray-Bans. My ears nearly came off too. I threw the helmet, gloves and glasses to the ground, just managing to press my palms together and lower my head in the approved fashion before His Majesty's arrival. You're not supposed to look at the royal presence, but I sneaked a peek. A puzzled smile crossed the regal visage and a hand was raised in greeting as he flashed past. He was probably wondering how five scruffy bikers managed to get into his country.

We were also obliged to genuflect toward each of the next four Land Cruisers as they sped by — red, blue, white and green — each bearing one of King Jigme Singye's four sibling-wives.

Bhutan is a remarkable country. Its geography, terrain, reli-

gion and stable leadership, together with strict immigration rules, have allowed it to remain a quiet backwater. Somehow, riding the anachronistic Enfield over its rambling mountain

roads seemed perfectly appropriate. And you just never know when you'll bump into the king!

The country

They say it's the last Shangri-La: I preferred to think of it as a magic kingdom. Only slightly larger than Maryland (U.S.), Bhutan in 1997 was not much more than a scattering of villages and small towns on the southern slopes of the Himalayas with a total population of just 750,000. It was perhaps more easily defined by what was not there than by what was: There were no trains, cities, shopping malls or freeways, and very few vehicles. The country's only traffic signal, in the capital Thimpu, had been considered unnecessary and removed. A bored, uniformed cop directed what little traffic there was. In the week we were in Bhutan I saw just three bicycles, and more cows than cars.

Though poor, the Bhutanese seemed easy-going, friendly people, usually smiling and polite. (In 1972 King Jigme Singye Wangchuck introduced a Gross National Happiness Index to supplement conventional measures of economic growth, like GDP.) As subsis-



Mechanic Gyan rebuilds a Royal Enfield gearbox on the roadside (above). Graham negotiates Yutong La (top).



Prayer flags snap in the wind. Roadside chortens (monuments) are common. Trongsa Dzong is the largest fortress in Bhutan.



tence farmers, most families own a smallholding on which they grow rice, vegetables and chilies — their basic diet. Unlike India's vegetarian Hindus, though, the Buddhist Bhutanese add beef or chicken. Although their religion forbids killing, they eat meat if someone else slaughtered it!

To maintain Bhutan's ethnic integrity, King Jigme Singye Wangchuck also introduced several controversial programs: repatriating Nepalese refugees; requiring Bhutanese to wear their national dress. And, mindful of nearby Nepal's experience, a tourist visa still costs \$250 per day, the intention being to avoid the country being overrun, like Khatmandu, with vagabond travelers. The visa, though, does include accommodation in government guest houses, meals and a guide.

Jigme Singye has now abdicated in favor of his son, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, and Bhutan has become a constitutional (rather than absolute) monarchy with an elected government. Even TV and the internet have been introduced — though whether that's a positive change or not remains to be seen!

The company

The first motorcycle tour company allowed into Bhutan, Himalayan Roadrunners organized our odyssey on Chennai (Madras)-built Enfields (the "Royal" came later). The 500cc Bullets were made "Like a Gun" just as they were in 1956 — though our 1997 bikes included turn signals and a twin-leading-shoe front brake. But the feel was still strictly vintage.

Our train of five bikes included Himalayan Roadrunners' Rob Callander and Charles Gay, plus Gyan, our mechanic with two drivers in the support truck, and Dorje, our mandatory Bhutanese guide with his own minivan and driver.

As of 2019, Himalayan Roadrunners still offers tours of Nepal and Bhutan, and it's now possible to ride right across the country from west to east and into Assam, India.

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HONDA RC45 RACER TEST

Story by Alan Cathcart
Photos by Kel Edge

Honda's V4-engined RC45 had a difficult birth, at a time when Superbikes were challenging 500GP lap records.

Born in 1993, it took four years for the successor to the legendary RC30 to win the World Superbike championship, but on the eve of Honda's 50th birthday, American John Kocinski delivered the prize the company's founder Soichiro Honda coveted above all others on two wheels: the top honor in 4-stroke racing for a company whose corporate and sporting success over the

previous half-century had until recently been based on ever more sophisticated 4-strokes. To do this in 1997, the company's engineers produced a virtual 4-stroke GP bike that revved to nearly 15,000rpm.

It was a sweet triumph for Honda, whose previous World Superbike titles had been won a decade earlier in 1988 and 1989, courtesy of Fred Merkel and the Team Rumi RC30. Honda then sat out the Superbike class at world level for three years at the start of the decade, while they worked on their next-generation successor to the RC30. But throughout this time they continued to win Suzuka 8 Hours endurance races run to TT Formula 1 rules on the RVF750, which allowed full-on 4-stroke

racers with essentially just the engine castings derived from a street bike.

The absence from contention as the Superbike class attained significant World status must have been acutely frustrating to Honda management, in commercial as well as sporting terms. To make matters worse, the RC45 was at least a year late when it appeared at the end of 1993.

The new bike had a troubled debut season, although Aaron Slight's eight second places in 1994 without ever quite achieving a race victory, showed it could be a contender. It suffered handling problems exacerbated in 1995 by a swap from Dunlop to Michelin tires. But, in typical Honda fashion, dedicated work by its army of engineers



1997 CASTROL HONDA RC45

Engine: 748cc liquid-cooled 4-stroke 16-valve DOHC 90-degree V4, 72mm x 46mm bore and stroke, 13.2:1 compression ratio, 180hp @ 14,750rpm (at crankshaft)

Top speed: 188.9mph (304kph)

Fueling: Honda-PGM FI, four 46mm Keihin throttle bodies

Transmission: 6-speed with HRC power-shifter, chain final drive

Electrics: Nippon Denso digital electronic CDI

Frame/wheelbase: Extruded aluminium twin-spar frame with cast aluminium steering head and swingarm pivot/54.72in (1,390mm)

Suspension: Fully adjustable 47mm Showa inverted telescopic forks front, cast aluminium single-sided swingarm and fully adjustable Showa monoshock with rising-rate link rear

Brakes: Dual 12.6in (320mm) Brembo stainless discs front, single 7.7in (196mm) HRC stainless steel disc with with Racing CTS integrated brake system

Tires: 12/60 x 17in radial front, 18/67-17 radial rear

Weight (dry): 357.15lb (162kg)

HRC Chief Engineer
Shuhei Nakamoto (right).



eventually had its just reward — no doubt backed up by a budget ending with several extra zeros.

Team manager Neil Tuxworth's British-based Castrol Honda team had been charged with World Superbikes victory in 1997. HRC Chief Engineer Shuhei Nakamoto had supplied a 186-horsepower version of Honda's V4 engine. John Kocinski, recruited from Ducati in a straight swap with Honda's Carl Fogarty, was the vital final piece of the puzzle.

Eventually it was mission accomplished for the Castrol Honda team, with Kocinski clinching the World Championship ahead of Ducati's Fogarty and his Honda teammate Aaron Slight. To celebrate that, I was given the exclusive chance to ride the title-winning RC45 in Sentul, Indonesia, the day

after Kocinski had scored his ninth race victory of the season in the final round.

For me, this completed a hands-on overview of the extended development cycle of the RC45, which I first rode in prototype form at Suzuka almost five years before. Back then, I'd already had an inkling of the handling problems that would afflict the new model. The front wheel felt light, leading to power understeer and potentially compromised steering and front end grip. Full marks to Honda for not taking umbrage at my criticism, but allowing me to ride





The RC45 uses a twin-spar aluminum frame, with a single-sided swingarm and a Showa monoshock at the rear.

each successive version up until the V4 Superbike was replaced by the RC51 (aka VTR1000 SP-01 V-twin) in 2000.

This meant I'd experienced its strung-out development curve, as it won Australian Superbike titles with Anthony Gobert and Kirk McCarthy, plus

the AMA championship and Daytona 200 with Miguel Duhamel, but continued to struggle at World Superbike level. But riding the 1997 Castrol Hondas of both Kocinski and teammate Slight, who finished third overall in the title chase, revealed a reinvented RC45.

Whereas each successive version had felt like the powered-up progeny of the previous year, the World champion Honda had a character all its own. Riding Kocinski's RC45 first underlined this. To make this bike motor, I had to ride it like the 4-stroke GP racer it had





Cathcart aboard the RC45. When twisted to full bore, the 4-stroke machine pleasantly and suddenly “takes on the mantle” of a 2-stroke machine.

become. Maybe that’s why Li’l John took to it so quickly, as he was the only man until Max Biaggi more than a decade later to have won World titles in both GP and Superbike racing.

The Honda revved like a 2-stroke, but it still drove as cleanly as a road bike from 6,000rpm upwards. From 10,000rpm on, things happened faster, then from 13,000rpm it took on the mantle of a 2-stroke GP racer. No 4-stroke I’d ridden before had ever picked up speed like this. Despite the SBK class 70.4-pound weight penalty, I

Life with John: Castrol Honda Team Manager Neil Tuxworth interview

Team manager par excellence Neil Tuxworth headed Honda Britain’s road racing efforts for more than 20 years, during which he masterminded Honda winning three World Superbike titles with American riders John Kocinski and Colin Edwards, as well as copious Isle of Man TT victories via the likes of Joey Dunlop and John McGuinness, and a succession of British Superbike Championship wins, most notably with Japanese expat Ryuichi Kiyonari. A skilled racer himself, who finished second in the Isle of Man TT as well scoring a Manx GP win and five third places in TT races, Neil scored many points finishes on TZ Yamahas in Grand Prix racing, and also competed successfully in motocross, sand racing and even ice racing. He was the man who signed John Kocinski to replace Carl Fogarty in the Castrol Honda World Superbike team for 1997 — leading to a successful outcome for the hitherto unconsidered RC45.

AC: Neil, the RC45 had a troubled birth, but eventually it became a champion bike. How did it happen?

NT: It took a little while. When we first started using it in 1994, we didn’t win a single race that first year. I think 1995 with Aaron was the first time we actually won a race, in Albacete, and then we backed that up with a victory in Sentul at the end of the year. But then of course, in 1996 Carl Fogarty came on board and won four races for us on the RC45 to finish fourth in the World series, two places behind Aaron who finished runner-up to Troy Corser — so it all looked pretty promising for us in 1997. But then funnily enough Carl told us, “That bike will never win a World Championship,” before returning to Ducati for 1997 — he swapped positions with

John Kocinski, and John did indeed win that World title for us on the RC45, and in the process of doing so beat Carl on his Ducati! It was a very interesting and rewarding year working with John.

AC: John Kocinski had a reputation as being a difficult person. Was that your experience?

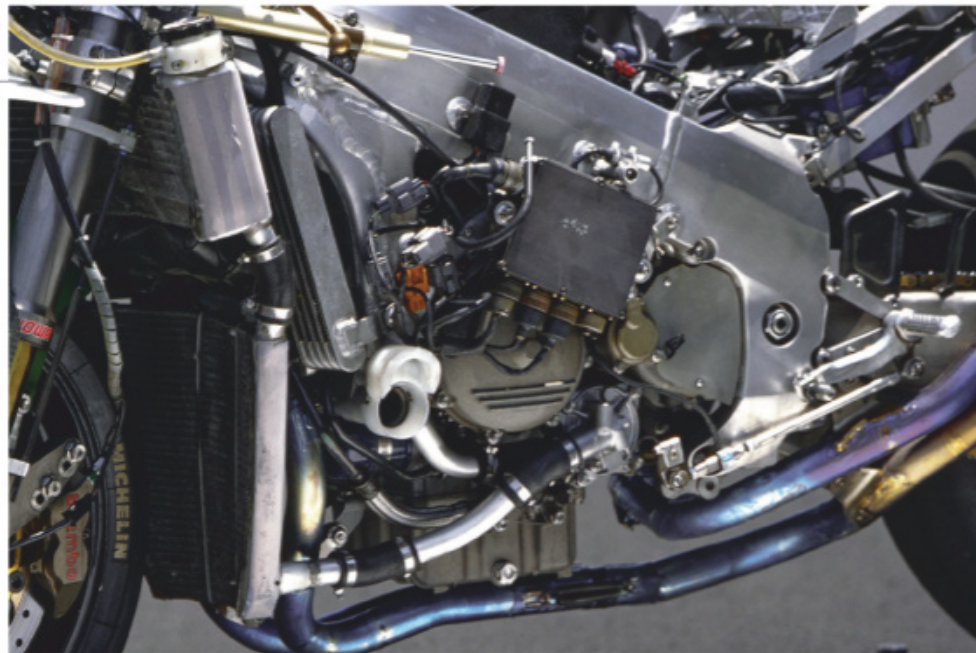
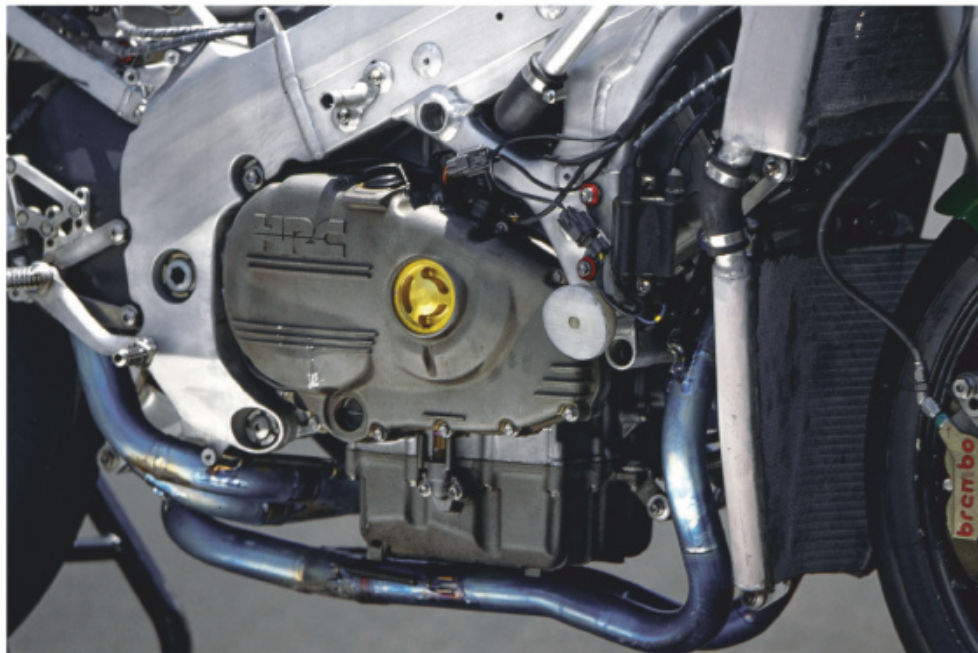
NT: On the contrary — he was a very professional person. Once word got out that John Kocinski was joining our team, the doomsayers chimed in big time. I obviously didn’t know John, but I’d heard all the horror stories about him. I tried to look into everything, and what I realized pretty quickly after having met John was that teams might have been very good at looking after John at a race track, but they’d not been very good at organizing things off-track — and John likes to be organized. So we made sure that we organized everything for him, not just his racing, but basically his entire life while he was with the team. That meant his meals, his travel plans, his time between races — everything. We just made things work for him. So it wasn’t like, racing’s over for this weekend, goodbye John, see you in two weeks’ time, get on with it. He became part of our group and part of our team, and I actually had a lot of laughs with John. We got on really well together, and it was a really nice compliment when he said at the end of the season that it was the most enjoyable year he’d ever had in motorcycle racing. I think that was a great compliment to all of us in



Neil Tuxworth, Honda Britain’s team manager for more than two decades.

the team, because we really enjoyed working with him.

I like John. Racing needs characters, and John was definitely a character. I think a lot of people got the wrong impression of him — I think if you were OK with John, John was OK with



On the RC45, Honda's engineers improved horsepower by introducing twin injectors, larger air intakes and a larger airbox.

reckon a few 500cc GP bikes would have struggled to stay with it out of a slow corner. It even sounded different. That flat drone became a whine as the revs soared and suddenly I was hitting the 14,750rpm rev-limiter.

HRC Chief Engineer Shuhei Nakamoto, later to head up the company's successful onslaught on the MotoGP World title, with Marc Márquez winning five World titles under his supervision, was the HRC development

engineer leading HRC's RC45 R&D team, and was on hand for my Indonesian escapade. He explained how Honda had developed the engine to this level.

"Between the 1996 and 1997 seasons, we made many detail changes to the

you, and that's how it worked for us. I still say to this day that without any shadow of a doubt John Kocinski is the most talented motorcycle racer I've ever worked with — and as you know, I've worked with a few! He was the guy with the greatest talent of anyone I've ever worked with, and very versatile into the bargain. He won the 250cc World Championship with Yamaha, he won 500GP races with Yamaha and Cagiva, and of course he won the World Superbike Championship for Castrol Honda. What a range of ability — and I hear he's not a bad dirt tracker on top of that!

AC: In terms of developing the RC45 Superbike from 1994 to 1997, how much of it was done by your Honda Britain-based team, and how much by HRC? Because HRC had a stand-offish relationship with the Flamminis, and thus with World Superbike as a whole, didn't they?

NT: Yes, that's true — they did a bit, but in fairness we had Nakamoto-san on board from HRC at the time, and he was pushing very strongly for us to be successful. He's a very hard man, and he pushed HRC quite strongly with the development. So obviously, on setup, it was the team, but on the changes to the bike and the specification, that was HRC — and that came from Nakamoto pushing hard all the time, using the feedback from the riders and the team themselves. Certainly, the success that the RC45 had, and indeed the SP-01 and SP-02 V-twins later on, came predominantly thanks to his efforts.

AC: Was reliability ever a problem with the RC45? Because after all it was a development of the RVF which copiously won the Suzuka 8 Hours.

NT: The only time when I ever recall us having a really serious problem was in Race 2 at Monza in 1998, when Aaron Slight was lying second and he did have an engine failure two laps from the end. If he'd finished second in that race he'd have won the World Championship that year, which would have been our second in a row with the RC45. But that was genuinely the only time we ever had a mechanical problem — it was generally a very reliable motorcycle.

AC: In spite of which, Honda then decided to go the V-twin route in 2000. Why?

NT: Yes they did, because of the way the rules were. With a V-twin you could obviously have lighter weight and a 25-percent bigger engine capacity, and things just seemed to be loaded so heavily in Ducati's favor. My personal feeling is that Honda just wanted to show everyone that if they wanted to win championship titles and races with a V-twin, they could. And they did, and they won it again in 2002, and very nearly in 2001, as well. So I think having proved their point, they then reverted back to just supporting private teams to go Superbike racing with the help of local importers, like Ten Kate with Honda Europe — call it the Fireblade era. — *Alan Cathcart*



John Kocinski on the RC45 in 1997, the year he won the riders' championship.

“Still, Honda won that World Superbike title with a bike that was simply the best.”

engine specification,” he said. “On its own each was maybe quite small, but together they gave a major improvement in performance. Compared to 1996, we had about 10 horsepower more, giving more than 180 horsepower at the gearbox at our 14,750rpm power peak. This is more powerful than our World champion NSR500 Grand Prix machine!” I wonder how Mick Doohan felt about that?

Indeed, such figures used to belong to 500GP 2-strokes, and helped explain how the 4-stroke Superbikes had so greatly narrowed the performance gap with GP racing. The main factor in Honda’s horsepower hike was adapting twin injectors for the 72mm x 46mm 16-valve V4 engine’s PGM-FI electronic fuel injection. Combined with larger air intakes and a bigger airbox, revised valve and ignition timing delivered a significant power increase from 10,000rpm upwards.

“We use the first injector only till 8,000rpm, then the second one comes in as well, to give maximum fuel flow,” Nakamoto said. “We can change the point at which this happens, but so far we haven’t done so at races, only in testing. But it made a big improvement to performance.” This helped fill the midrange trough in the power curve which had previously necessitated the bulky system of variable-length intake trumpets.

While Honda’s main development for their championship season went into the engine, the chassis was changed very little, Nakamoto said. Hopping aboard Kocinski’s bike, I immediately discovered the same jacked-up GP-style stance as on his works Ducati I’d ridden a year earlier. My body weight was in the middle of the wheelbase, but it was still a surpris-

ingly spacious riding position. Kocinski sat farther back on the RC45 than Slight, who loaded up the front end with his weight.

On the Kocinski bike, this allowed me to tuck well down behind the screen in a straight line, yet still slide forward a little when sitting up for turns.



Cathcart squares up a corner at the Sentul International Circuit.

It felt good. But jacking up the rear end steepened the effective steering head angle from its 24-degree static measurement, and this, combined with John running the shortest swingarm and tightest wheelbase possible on the bike, delivered a machine that steered

quickly, turned sharply and handled nimbly. The RC45 had a variety of different swingarm lengths ranging across a 27mm span. Slight usually went for the longest option, Kocinski the shortest. This helped him counter the effect of the Honda’s fairly high center of gravity. Using the beefy midrange to powersteer in corners, the shortened wheelbase and rearwards weight transfer lightened the front wheel, and helped him turn the bike on the throttle. He’d used a similar technique to win 500cc GPs with Cagiva.

Without pretending to emulate JK, I could feel this setup in two ways. The shorter, steeper Kocinski bike turned in more nimbly than Slight’s RC45. Then it waved the back wheel in the air when I squeezed hard on the brakes, even with my extra weight compared to JK’s. Partly this was due to the shorter wheelbase, partly to what felt like soft front suspension settings, and partly to the raised rear ride height, all combining with the extra weight transfer to lift the rear wheel.

I noticed just one more handling glitch, namely understeer while on the gas exiting corners. The Hondas ran 17-inch Michelins at most rounds that year while many rivals were on 16.5-inch Dunlops. Still, Honda won that World Superbike title with a bike that was simply the best. Kocinski took full advantage of several wet races, using his peerless rain skills and the RC45’s flat torque curve. But he also excelled in the

dry. Anyone who watched him catch the pack and pass them to win at Assen knows he deserved the World Superbike title.

But if JK hadn’t done it, there’s a good chance teammate Slight might have instead! **MC**

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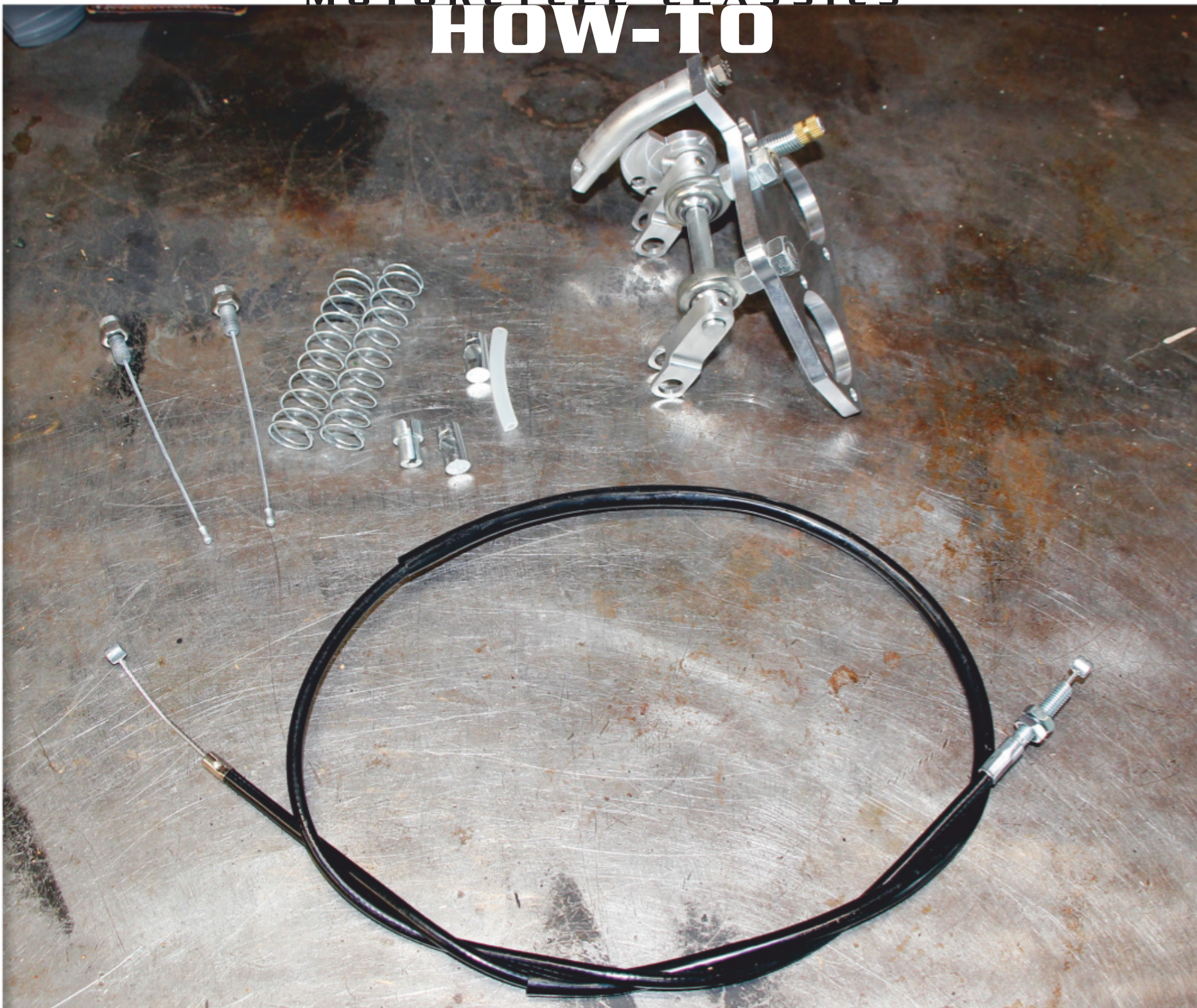
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HOW-TO



All the new parts that come in Donald Pender's Norton carburetor gantry kit, laid out and ready for installation.

Adding a carb gantry to your Norton Commando

A few issues ago we installed a pair of Donald Pender's version of the Lansdowne dampers on a 1974 Norton Commando. While looking through his list of available parts, we noticed another cool upgrade we were interested in trying out. Don manufactures a gantry setup for the Norton Commando. The kit, once installed, does away with the 1-into-2 cable throttle setup and greatly simplifies carb synchronization.

You'll search in vain for it at tritonmotorcycleparts.com, so instead your best bet is to email Don directly at madass140@gmail.com. That's what we did, and for just \$134, shipping included, exactly one week later (from the Philippines!) we had the kit shown here.

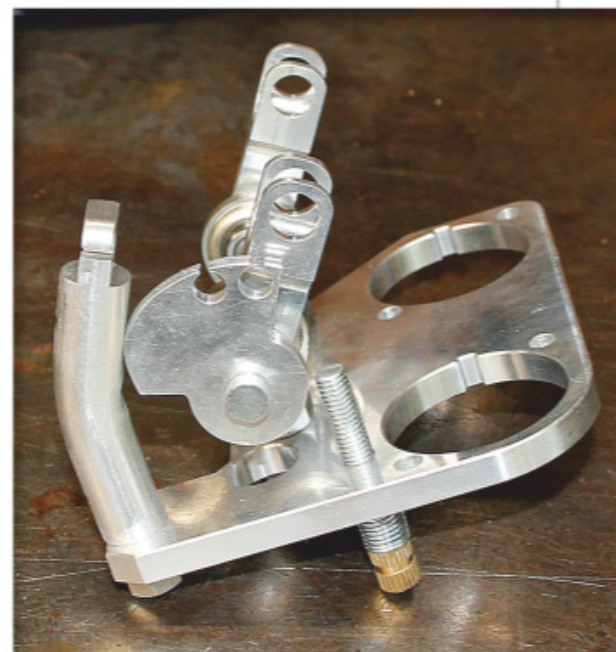
In this *How-To* we'll show you the steps necessary to change over from the 1-into-2 cable system to the single-cable gantry. One might ask whether this is really a necessary upgrade, and the answer, of course, is no. Norton Commandos with dual carburetors have been running their stock cable setups for decades and are functioning just fine.

This is a modification that would definitely be labeled a "farkle," but it is a practical one, as the setup delivers a smoother, easier throttle pull. It's just one of those things you do to your machine to make it your own.

— Keith Fellenstein

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A close-up of the gantry, which simplifies carb synchronization.

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HOW-TO



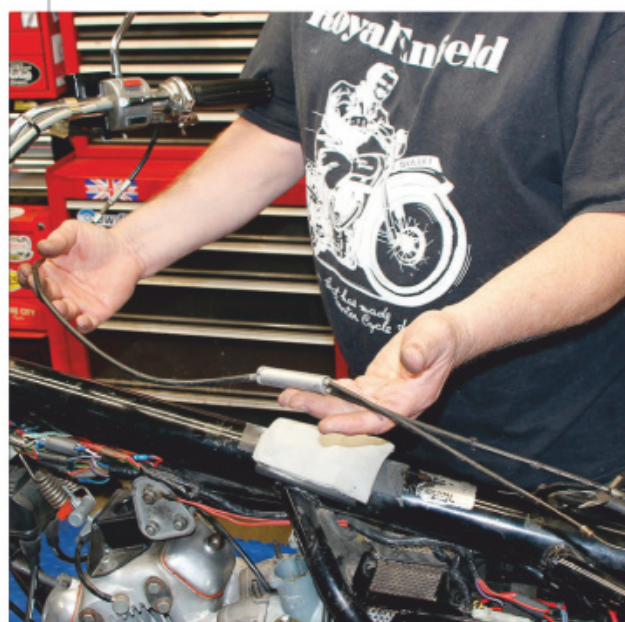
1 Start by removing the seat then the tank for easy access to the throttle cable and carburetors. Next remove the balance tube between the carburetors.



2 Remove the carburetor top screws and extract the slides and needles.



3 Pull the return springs back and carefully remove the metering needles. Note the position of the clip on the needle in case it gets displaced and you have to reset it. Free the cable ends from the slides and remove the cables from the carburetor tops.



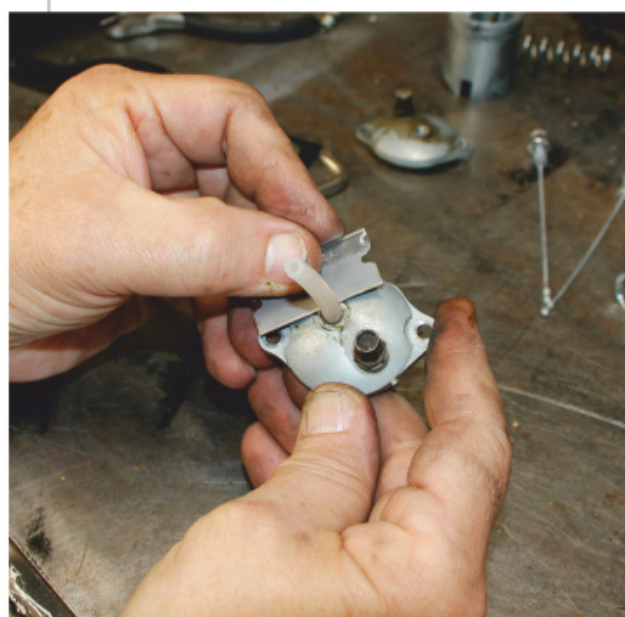
4 Once the carburetor ends of the throttle cable are free, disconnect the existing cable from the twist grip.



5 Unscrew the cable adjusters from the carburetor tops; they won't be needed.



6 Take the supplied length of silicone tubing and screw it into the carburetor top as far as possible (usually about 1/4 inch).



7 Trim the excess off with a razor blade, flush with the top of the carburetor. Repeat this step with the other carburetor top.



8 With a pair of needle nose pliers, grasp the new slide cable close to the slide ferrule and push it through the silicone tubing. Repeat for the second carburetor.



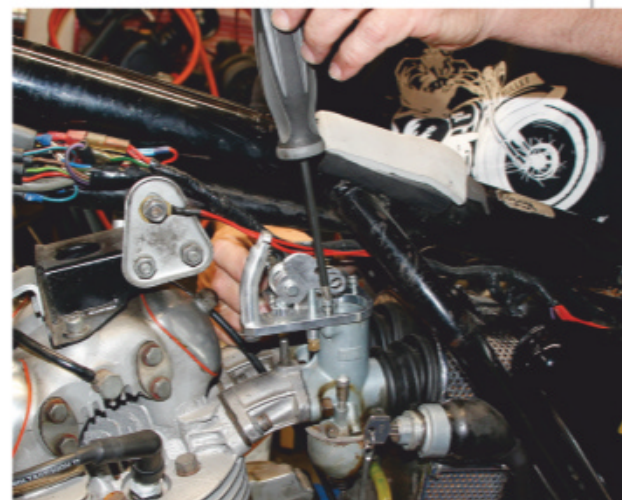
9 Inspect your work. Both tops should look like this.



10 Using your preferred method, replace the slide return springs, using the new ones supplied with the kit. I like to snap the spring coils over the cable and essentially screw the spring onto the cable. It seems much easier than trying to compress the spring. Hold the cable and slide all at once.



11 Now we go back to the bike and loosen the manifold to head screws about one turn each. I've got a 7/32-inch allen key that's cut down on the short end to fit between the carburetor and manifold. I've also crudely cut a ball end on the long end since I didn't have a spare ball end key to butcher.



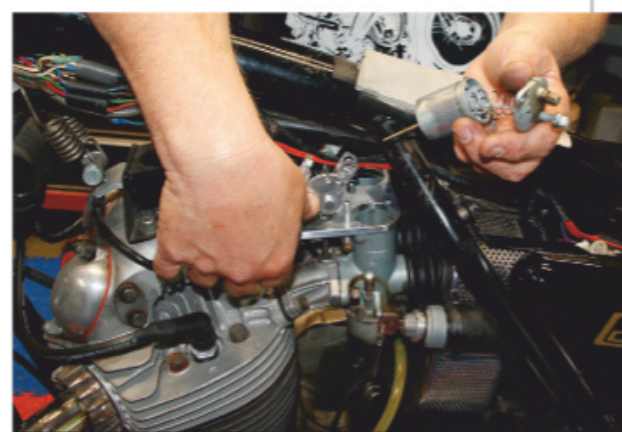
12 Once the carburetor mounting screws are loose, attach the gentry plate with the carburetor top screws and carefully tighten them. This aligns the carburetors to the plate.



13 With the carburetors linked together with the gentry plate, re-tighten the mounting screws with the cut down allen key.



14 Going back to the gentry plate, remove the top screws from one side and loosen the other so that the plate is loose on the carburetors.



15 Take one new slide assembly and carefully place it into the side of the gentry plate where you have removed the carburetor top screws. I say carefully because it is all too easy to snag the needle on the needle jet when inserting the slide. Take your time and it will drop into place.



16 Replace the top screws but don't tighten them yet, then remove the screws on the opposite side and replace the slide assembly there. Once you have both slide assemblies in place, tighten the top screws evenly and snugly, but remember they have farther to go than they did originally, so not as much thread engagement with the bodies.



17 Place the rotating trunion in the actuating arm of the gentry, pull the slide cable up through the slot, making sure the locknut rests squarely between the shoulders of the trunion. Repeat on the other side.



18 Pull the cable up only far enough to slip it into the trunion; it is possible to pull the slide up far enough to snag on the gentry top (ask me how I know that). That's outside the operating range of the slide so not likely to happen in use.



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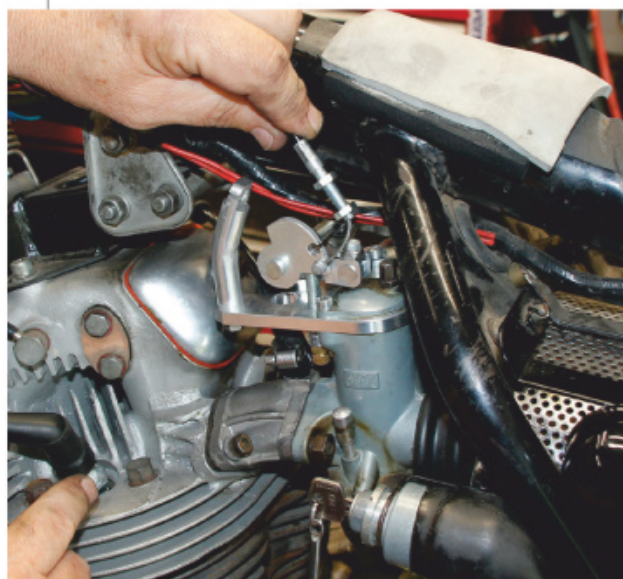
19 Now that everything's assembled you can take up the slack in the gantry with the new idle adjustment screw.



20 When you have the slack out of the new setup, back the old idle speed screws out about one turn each. They now have no purpose in speed regulation.



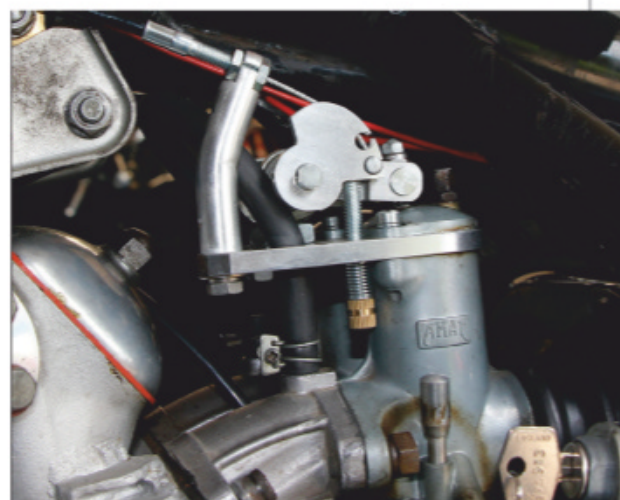
21 Fit the throttle grip end of the new throttle cable to your grip. Now is a good time to renew the grease in the assembly and check for good function of the assembly.



22 Run the gantry end of the new throttle cable through the frame and attach the cable end barrel to the rightmost slot in the gantry arm.



23 Pull the cable back, attach it to the gantry and adjust it until there is minimal slack. Test for smooth operation and full return.



24 Refit the balance tube, passing the left carburetor end through the hole in the gantry. Clamp it to the stub. A small outside diameter hose of sufficient strength fits better than the one I originally fitted.



25 If possible, before you refit the tank, check your carburetor synchronization. I used a TwinMax, but there are many options.



26 In this case, the carburetor on the left was slightly more open than the right, resulting in a lumpy idle. Use a 9/32-inch or 7mm wrench to adjust the cable.



27 With the tank and seat back on the bike you can't even notice the change. What you will notice when riding is a quicker throttle response, so you'll have to retrain your wrist to the new reality.

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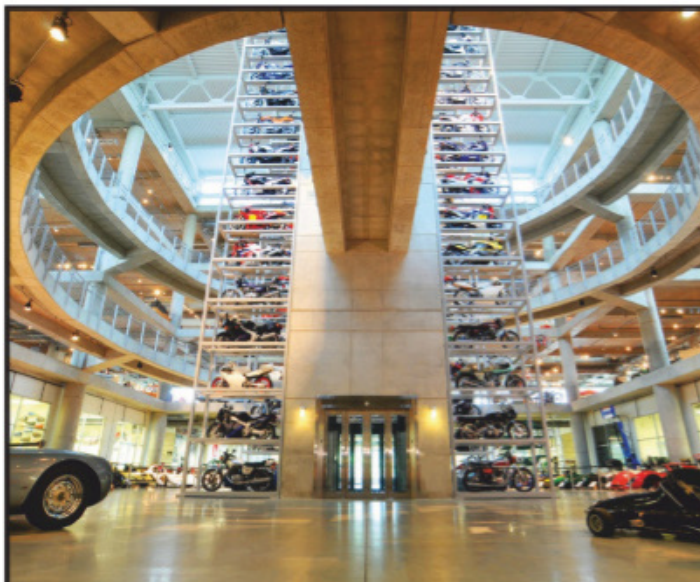
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“The short answer is no, ethanol affects fuel-injected bikes too ...”

Charging questions

Q: I have a 1966 BSA Lightning, a 1970 Honda CB750 and a 1974 Norton Commando that all use Podtronic or other aftermarket solid state rectifier/regulators for lead acid batteries. I would like to upgrade to lithium iron phosphate batteries and would like to know if I will be okay using the current voltage set points for lead acid batteries, or do I need to use rectifier/regulators specific for lithium batteries? Thank you for any help.

Wayne Robertson/via email

A: My opinion for a long time has been that most of the older bikes don't have the robust charging system necessary to keep a lithium iron phosphate (LiFe) battery fully charged. I recently spoke with Rick of Rick's Motorsport Electrics to see if things had changed. He said that most LiFe batteries like the charging voltage to be 14.2 volts, and not much higher or lower than that. I don't know what the charge cut-off point is for Podtronics, but the older Lucas Zener diode starts dumping voltage to ground in the 13-volt range. For the British bikes I'd stick with my usual recommendation of a good absorbed glass mat (AGM) battery for energy density and leak-proof design. Rick did say that he had a plug and play regulator rectifier for the CB750 that would work well with a LiFe battery.

Ethanol and EFI

Q: I enjoy reading your column every month and I turn to you with a question. Are fuel-injected bikes less affected by the ravages of ethanol gasoline than bikes with carburetors?

Robert Lazzaro/
Hopewell Junction, New York

A: The short answer is no, ethanol affects fuel-injected bikes too, but in different ways. The fuel still seems to go bad faster than pure gasoline, and will still draw moisture out of the air. Most fuel-injected bikes are going to have a fuel pump, which can get gummed up and seize. I suppose the injector nozzles could crust over too, but would hope the injector pressure



Ready to take your classic queries: Tech Editor Keith Fellenstein.

would overcome that. My routine for carbureted bikes is to turn off the taps on the way home and try to enter my garage on fumes to help keep the carburetor bowls clean. Since you can't do that with a fuel-injected bike your best bet would be using a fuel stabilizer additive.

Kickstarter troubles

Q: Hi, Keith, I've been a longtime reader and now I actually have a question of my own. The knuckle of the kickstarter on my beloved 1971 OSSA Pioneer snapped violently. Read, mid-kick! To my great surprise there are new knuckles available. But here is the problem, post dismantling the broken knuckle from the lever. My question is about the little rod. Now obviously this rod mates to the dimpled areas on both the original and new knuckles, acting as a position locator or such. My question is, how and where in relation to the kicklever itself is this rounded-end little rod inserted and kept in place during reassembly? I have all the pieces, I think. What I think I am missing may be a tiny spring which acts on this rod. But I can't find a drawing that tells me exactly where and with what, if anything, this little position rod is mounted. Please, Keith, I do love my OSSA and want to be sure this goes back together properly. And thank you for your monthly column.

Max Rockatansky/via email

A: I haven't found a good engineering drawing of the kickstart lever assembly, so I'm going to have to make an educated guess as to how it all goes

together. There is probably a hole in the lever part of the assembly that may even still have the spring in it. Triumph/BSA have a similar setup as do many other vintage bikes. If the spring is found, I usually pack the hole with heavy red grease and push the spring and plunger back in place. Often I find I can then hold the plunger in place with a finger while pushing the splined shaft back into the lever. If that doesn't work you can use a closely sized socket, pipe or a shim as a guide/shoehorn, to push the new shaft in while compressing the spring and plunger. Hope this helps. And thanks for your kind words.

Plug fouling

Q: I have a 1965 Triumph T100 500cc. I've restored it externally to look like my 1964 but have not cracked the engine. My problem now is the plugs are fouling. My solution so I can ride is to carry clean plugs and change them when fouling occurs. I've run a compression test and the readings are a little below the minimum value. My local mechanic, who is quite good with Triumphs said he has seen them run with levels lower than mine and not have problems. The plugs are wet black and I assumed oil. Maybe I'm wrong and it's gas which would be carburetor. May I have your thoughts on this? I'm trying to sell the bike and I'd like to fix the problem. Both plugs foul at the same rate. Thanks!

Ed Gottshall/via email

A: Ed, you didn't mention how many miles were on the engine, but a common problem with these engines is worn valve guides. With that you would have fairly normal compression, but constant oil leaking down into the cylinders. If you want to investigate further, pull the intake manifold and exhaust pipes and look for fresh oil on the back of the valves. If those seem normal, then I'd try dropping the carburetor needles one notch and with new plugs; see if that changes the plug colors.

Email questions to keithsgarage@motorcycleclassics.com or write:
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Circle #5; see card pg 81

Motorcycle CLASSICS

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IFC = Inside Front Cover IBC = Inside Back Cover OBC = Outside Back Cover Expires October 31, 2021

Looking for the right bike

My modest stable of motorcycles is occupied by less than a half dozen machines, each one bought not so much on a predicated search for that specific bike but the simple expedience of opportunity. The 1983 Laverda RGS is the dream machine, a bike I never thought I'd own until one miraculously made itself available (thanks Scott Potter). I was riding a black 1972 short wheelbase BMW R75/5 when we started *Motorcycle Classics* back in 2005, but sold it when the Laverda came along the same year, so when a green 1973 long wheelbase R75/5 was offered to me a few years back I just had to get it. The 1976 Suzuki GT185 on the other hand was nowhere on my radar when a friend said he was selling his, but one ride around the block and I knew I had to have it. It's a brilliant little machine, stone cold reliable and the perfect learner bike for new riders, young and old. The 1974 Laverda SF2 doesn't really count as mine, a build I did for buddy Matt, who seems to like the fact that it's sharing space with two other Laverdas: my RGS and yet another RGS the two of us bought as a future project.

That brings me to the latest addition to the garage, my 1995 BMW K75, which, like the others, just sort of presented itself. I'd been thinking about getting something in the way of an "appliance," a reliable non-collectible I could ride daily without worrying about scratching its paint or dulling its brightwork from days spent under the hot sun, a bike that wouldn't bum me out if I dropped it for whatever stupid reason. Laverda plastic is close to unobtainium and classic BMW bodywork keeps getting harder to find.

So that made the idea of finding something not so dear attractive. But what to get? The answer came when I spied the K75 for sale on the local Craigslist. I'd just sold my 1972 Datsun pickup, so with a bit of cash in hand the timing was perfect, and the K75 seemed the ideal appliance if ever there was one. Renowned for its reliability and boasting an impressive list of standard features including triple disc brakes with ABS, fuel injection, liquid cooling and a smooth, counter-balanced inline triple, the K75 seemed perfect. And yet, nine months into ownership, I'm still not sure how much I like it, because it doesn't seem to move me emotionally.

After years of riding old and oftentimes decrepit machinery, I've gotten used to making adjustments in riding style and expectations with the bikes I ride. My old Norton required a certain attitude every time I swung a leg over it, and I sure didn't ride it for the maintenance-free experience. My R75/5 on the other hand is hugely reliable, but it requires concessions to less-than-ideal brakes and suspension, the drums a little on the feeble side compared to modern machinery and the suspension regularly overwhelmed by its limited travel.

The Laverda is an absolutely awesome road bike, happy to run autobahn speeds all day, but it's ponderous in town and simply



Backus on his K75 leading riders during the 2019 Tour of Lawrence (Kansas).

ill-suited to urban riding. Contrast that with the GT185, a fab little in-town bike that's completely out of its element on the road. It'll get up to 65mph no problem, but it's simply not happy running fast.

So that made the K75 seem perfect. Unfair it might not be the best road bike, but it'll sing along at 85mph without effort, and its excellent balance makes it easy to ride in town. The stock saddlebags are great for quick trips to the grocery store or stowing rain gear and tools on a day trip. It gets great mileage — so far averaging around 47mpg — doesn't burn any oil, stops on a dime, has a huge headlamp, big blinkers and excellent rearview mirrors that never vibrate, giving a clear, crisp view of the road behind.

So what's the problem? It's boring. While the inline three is an excellent mill (albeit a bit slow to respond to revs), it has all the personality of an air compressor. There's no soul to the muted exhaust and the whirring of the engine is simply white noise; there's no hint of anything interesting going on inside. I suppose that's the point of bikes like the K75, machines that insulate the rider from the mechanical goings-on to, theoretically, augment the riding experience. For me, that insulation just blunts the joy of the riding experience.

And yet, a recent gig motorcycle marshaling the local bicycle races showed the K to be the perfect mount for the job, its appliance-like qualities complementing the task at hand. Quiet, predictable and smooth, its big turn signals flashing brightly courtesy of the built-in hazard switch, I couldn't think of a better bike to be on during the two days I spent leading racers around the course. I'd been seriously considering selling the K, but now I'm thinking I need to ride it a little more to uncover its character. Maybe it is the right bike and a keeper after all.

Richard Backus/Founding Editor

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Circle #4; see card pg 81



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CALENDAR SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

Don't miss these upcoming events!

8/30 Back for its 14th year, join us for the fun at the Bonneville Vintage GP, Aug. 30-Sept. 1, at the Utah Motorsports Campus in Tooele, Utah. Look for great AHRMA racing, plus the ever-popular Battle of the CB160s LeMans Start at noon on Saturday and Sunday. We'll host our annual *Motorcycle Classics* Vintage Bike Show, with trophies in five classes including awards for Best Restored and Best Rider in each class. On the web at bonnevillevintagegp.com

8/31 Visit the Owls Head Transportation Museum in Owls Head, Maine, for the Vintage Motorcycle Festival and Antique Aeroplane Show, Aug. 31-Sept. 1. Entry fee is \$18. The featured marque this year is Indian. On the web at owlshead.org

9/8 Visit the 37th Annual Battle of the Brits Motorcycle & Car Show and Swap Meet at Camp Dearborn in Milford, Michigan. This event regularly draws more than 200 bikes and 300 cars. Classic British, European and pre-1984 American bikes are invited to be a part of the show. Food and beverages will be available, along with on-site camping. On the web at metrotriumphriders.com

9/14 Join all the good folks and classic bikes at The Modern Classics Ride-In on Saturday, Sept. 14, in Boyertown, Pennsylvania. More than 100 vintage and custom bikes are expected. No judging, no classes and no awards, just a fun day of checking out vintage bikes with friends, food and more. On the web at martinmoto.com

9/15 Visit the 36th Annual Italian Motorcycle Owners Club 2019 Rally in Sturbridge, Massachusetts, with Benelli as the featured marque. The show runs from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. All Italian bikes and scooters are invited, and the show benefits the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. Judging is at noon for rally classes. On the web at imoc.website/calendar2

10/4 Join us for the 15th Annual Barber Vintage Festival at Barber Motorsports Park outside Birmingham, Alabama. The show runs through Oct. 6 and will feature AHRMA road racing, the American Motor Drome Wall of Death, Ace Corner, the swap meet and more. Our *Motorcycle Classics* bike show on Saturday will feature more than a dozen awards, with Honda Fours as our featured models. On the web at barbervintagefestival.org

10/18 Attend the 17th Annual Harvest Classic European & Vintage Motorcycle Rally in Luckenbach, Texas, Oct. 18-19. Registration starts Friday, and you can camp at the location Friday and Saturday night. The swap meet runs both days. Friday afternoon the 100cc Fun Run will take place, and Friday evening enjoy live music. Saturday is the big day, with the bike show, vintage trials, a home-cooked barbecue, music, raffles, a live auction and an outdoor motorcycle movie that night. On the web at harvestclassic.org

11/2 Head to Vicksburg, Mississippi, for the 3rd Annual Vicksburg Vintage Motorcycle Show. Entry is free and open to pre-1990 motorcycles. The show runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and more than 15 awards will be given away. The location is 1050 Washington St. For more info, contact Roger Harris at roger.harris@ergon.com or (601) 831-2079, or search Vicksburg Vintage Motorcycle Show on Facebook.



Frank Lipinski took home the Editors' Choice award for his 1982 Triumph T140ES Royal at the 2018 Barber Vintage Festival. Join us this year, Oct. 4-6.

Sept. 6-8 — 23rd Annual Radnor Hunt Concours d'Elegance. Malvern, PA. radnorconcours.org

Sept. 6-8 — Southern California Norton Owners Club High Sierra Ride. New route this year. Leaves from Lee Vining, CA. socalnorton.com

Sept. 6-8 — AHRMA Roadracing at Talladega Gran Prix Raceway. Munford, AL. ahrma.org

Sept. 7-8 — 30th Annual Classic British Motorcycle Club of Cincinnati Vintage Motorcycle Rally. Burlington, KY. sites.google.com/site/cincybritishbikes

Sept. 8 — Rice-O-Rama Vintage & Custom Japanese Motorcycle Show and Swap Meet. Spencer, MA. rice-o-rama.com

Sept. 14 — 11th Annual Central Coast Classic Motorcycle Show. Paso Robles, CA. centralcoastclassicmc.com

Sept. 27-28 — White Rose Motorcycle Club Antique Motorcycle Show & Swap Meet. Spring Grove, PA. whiterosemc.org

Sept. 27-30 — 2019 Vintage Yamaha Rally. Iron Horse Motorcycle Lodge, Robbinsville, NC. vintageyamaharally.com

Oct. 12 — El Camino Vintage Motorcycle Show & Swap Meet, Torrance, CA. elcaminoshow.com

Nov. 3 — 40th Annual Hansen Dam All Brit Ride. Near Glendale, CA. socalnorton.com

RIDES AND DESTINATIONS



PETRIFIED FOREST NATIONAL PARK, ARIZONA

While planning a trip to New Mexico earlier this year, I asked good buddy and fellow moto-journalist Joe Gresh to recommend places to see along the way. Petrified Forest National Park was the first place he mentioned. It would be on my northern route home and I'd never been there (a character flaw I intended to correct on this trip). As a kid fascinated by all things prehistoric, the concept of a petrified forest was intriguing. I didn't know what to expect. Would it be a forest of stone trees? Not quite, I was to learn.

Petrified Forest National Park straddles Interstate 40 in northeastern Arizona, with the northern entrance approximately 50 miles east of the New Mexico border. Viewed from above, the park looks like a squared-off and lop-sided figure 8, with I-40 cutting through at the waist. Petrified Forest National Park is bisected by the road that runs through it; just follow the 30-mile-long road from either the northern or southern entrance as it meanders through an incredibly vibrant and vivid desert floor. And what a stunning 30 miles they are. The panoramic views and colors are breathtaking, including such things as the Painted Desert (a name that speaks

for itself, shown in the photo above), Newspaper Rock (covered with ancient petroglyphs), the Rainbow Forest (a field of actual petrified, fallen logs near the park's southern entrance) and much, much more. Plan on spending at least a half-day on this ride through heaven, and bring a camera.

Theodore Roosevelt designated the area as the Petrified Forest National Monument in 1906 and it became a National Park in 1962, but as you might imagine, its history extends much further into the past. To understand its history, we need to go back hundreds of millions of years. Then, what is now northeastern Arizona was near the equator. Think subtropical climates, low-lying plains, streams, ancient plants and dinosaurs. Trees died and fell during this Late Triassic period 225 million years ago, volcanic ash blanketed everything, groundwater dissolved the ash's silicon dioxide, and the mix seeped into the fallen trees and formed quartz crystals. These crystals ultimately replaced the trees' organic matter and then iron oxides and other minerals merged with the silica, thus creating the brilliant colors observed in the petrified trees we see today. Petrified Forest National

Park's fields are littered with stunningly vibrant ancient trees. Several prehistoric species are represented; all are extinct. It is quite amazing.

Human inhabitants arrived in this area more than 8,000 years ago. People grew corn and built pit houses approximately 2,000 years ago. Homes built above ground followed centuries later and became known as *pueblos*. Human inhabitants left in the 1400s, most likely due to drought. Spanish explorers came on the scene in the 1600s, and by the mid-19th century, a United States government expedition created an east-west route through the area. This early trail would later become Route 66, and ultimately, I-40 (shortly after entering Petrified Forest National Park from the east, there's a preserved section of the original Route 66 with a vintage automobile that makes for a great photo). Improved access to the region gave rise to tourism; in the early days of the park's existence, theft of fossils (and specifically, petrified logs) was a serious problem. It's now a federal crime to remove rocks or fossils from the park, but there are petrified trees outside the park and you can buy artifacts at gift shops in nearby Holbrook. — Joe Berk

THE SKINNY

What: Petrified Forest National Park, 1 Park Road, #2217, Petrified Forest, AZ 86028.

Admission: \$15 for a motorcycle and passengers for seven days.

How to Get There: From the east, take I-40's Exit 311. From the west, take either Exit 285 or 286 at Holbrook, Arizona, then US 180 east.

Best Kept Secret: Perhaps the park itself. I've driven through this region on I-40 before and never noticed the signs for Petrified Forest National Park. There are also many other places of interest (and many interesting roads) in Arizona. Get a copy of my book *Destinations* to read more.

Avoid: Leaving home without enough water or a hat (it gets very hot in the summer months); taking anything out of the park.

More Photos: bit.ly/pfnp-az

More Info: nps.gov/pefo/index.htm



A field of petrified trees, one of many in the park.

New Stuff for Old Bikes

From vintage logo tees to a new pullover jacket, here are six products every classic bike fan should know about.



Dupli-Color vinyl and fabric coating

Recommended for use on seats, dashboards and other vinyl or fabric surfaces, this dye transformed the seat on ad man Shane Powers' Honda CB350 build. This lacquer paint dries to the touch in just 30 minutes. Available at auto parts stores or on Amazon.

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Honda Retro Red/White/Blue Wing Tee from Mayhem Industries Inc.

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Starting at \$49.99. More info: joerocket.com



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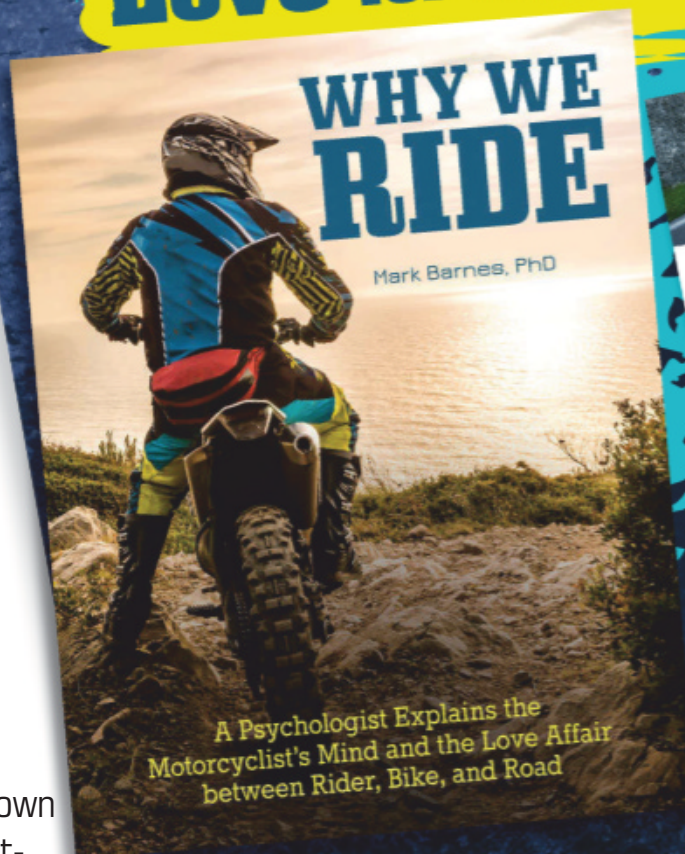


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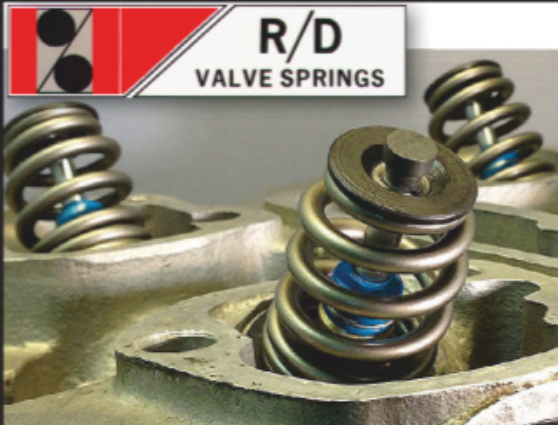
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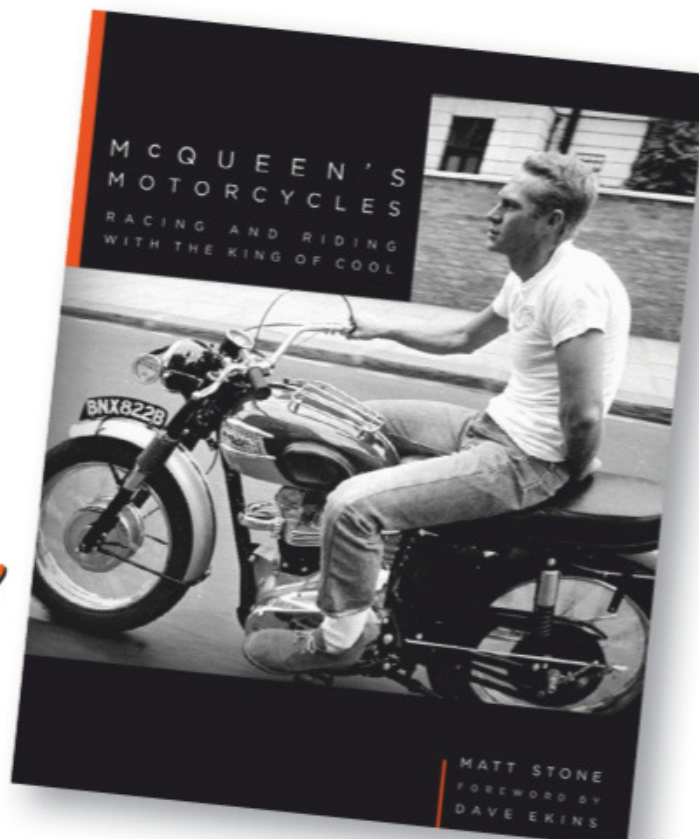
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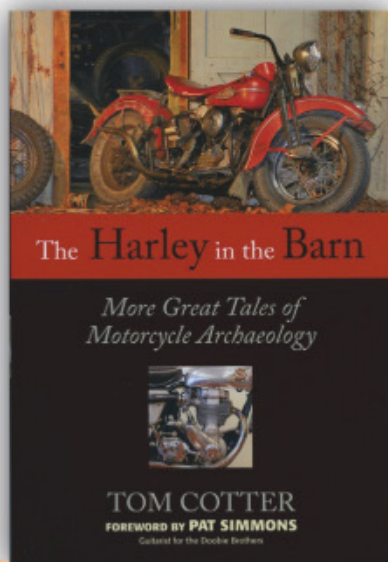
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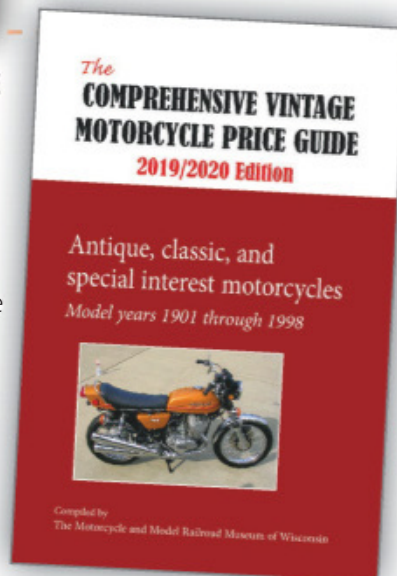
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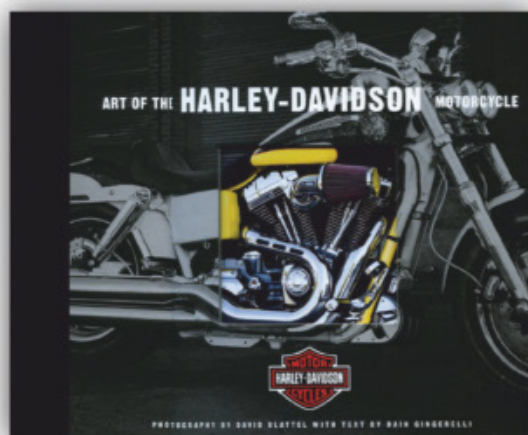
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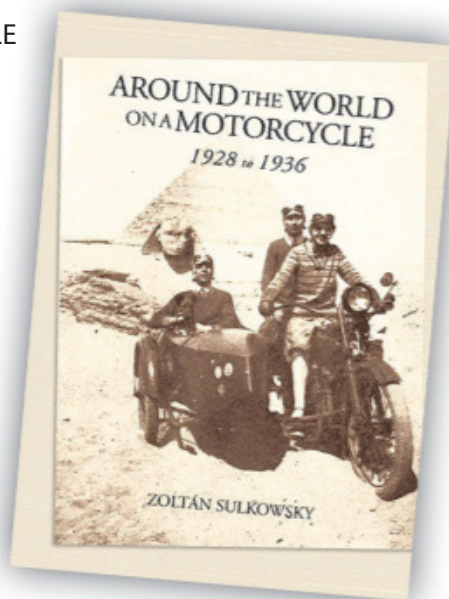
The Complete Book of BMW Motorcycles is a thorough year-by-year guide to every production machine ever built by Germany's leading motorcycle manufacturer. Get the story behind bikes such as the pre-World War II R5, the military R12, and the K1 "flying brick". This guide captures nearly a century of motorcycling excellence with a combination of historic and contemporary photos.

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AROUND THE WORLD ON A MOTORCYCLE

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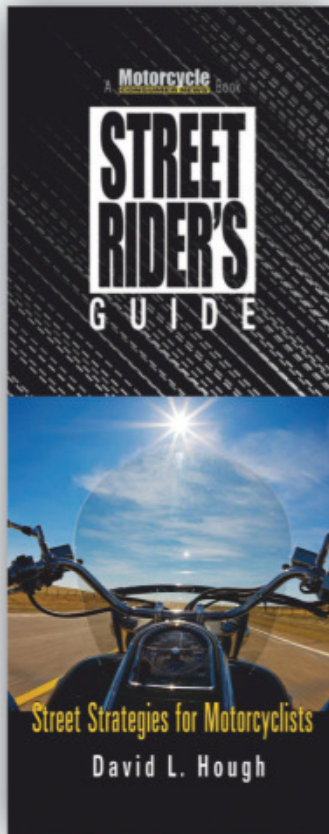
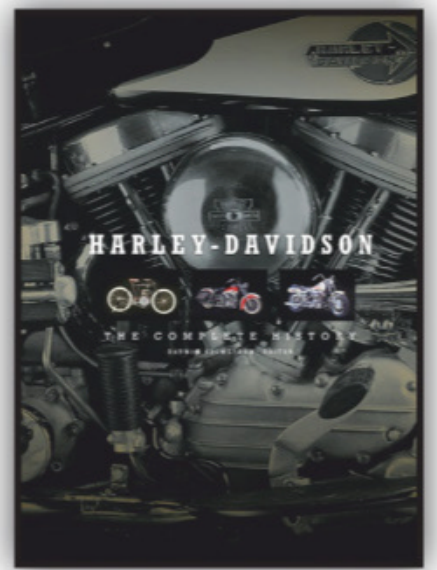
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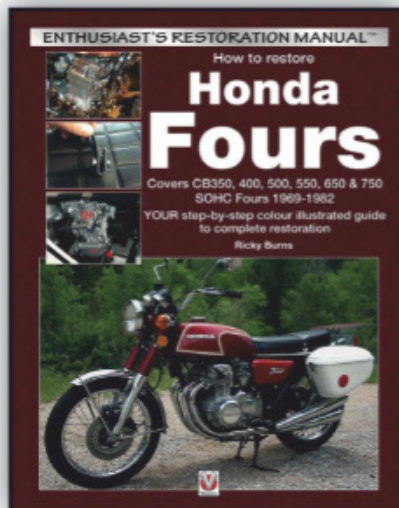
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STREET RIDER'S GUIDE

Street Rider's Guide spells out safety tactics for motorcycle riders looking to get the most out of their favorite hobby for as long as possible. Covering topics from A to Z, this is the go-to handbook for motorcyclists who want quick solutions to commonly encountered obstacles and road challenges, and who want to ride safer through improved situational awareness.

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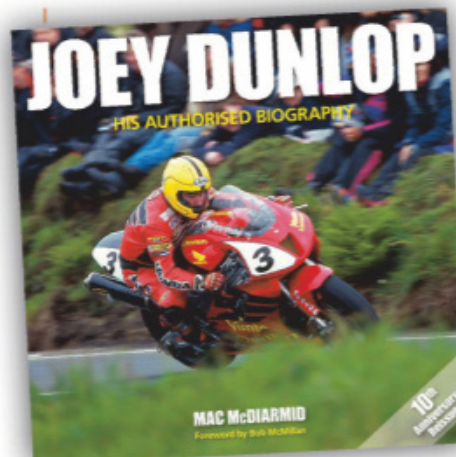
Mastering the Ride provides an exhilarating course in skills, safety, and common sense. With instructional color photographs and drawings, the book covers everything from improving a rider's skills of speed and passing to anticipating and handling street and road hazards, to executing quick stops, and more.

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Kawasaki W, H & Z is the story of the air-cooled "big" Kawasaki bikes in definitive detail, researched and written in Japan with the full cooperation of the factory. This series of models put the Kawasaki company on the map during the 1960s and 1970s, helping it survive a difficult era that saw hundreds of Japanese motorcycle makers reduced to just four.

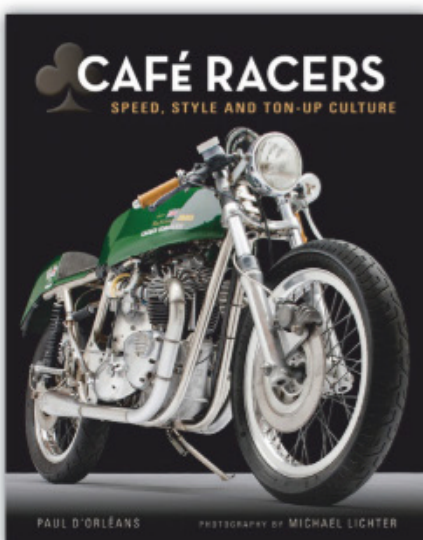
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JOEY DUNLOP

This illustrated official biography explores the life of the most successful racing motorcyclist in the 107-year history of the Isle of Man TT races. Joey Dunlop's achievements included three hat tricks at the Isle of Man TT races (1985, 1988, and 2000), where he won a record 26 races in total, as well as 24 wins in the Ulster Grand Prix and 13 in the North West 200 in his native Northern Ireland. For motorcycle fans, Joey Dunlop is still akin to royalty. *While Supplies Last!*

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The rebellious rock 'n' roll counter culture is what first inspired these bikes, with their owners often racing down public roads in excess of 100 miles per hour ("ton up," in British slang). Chronologically illustrated with fascinating historical photography, *Café Racers* travels through the eras of these nimble, lean, light, and head-turning machines. This stunning hardcover book features 224 pages filled with the story of these wonderful machines. *While Supplies Last!*

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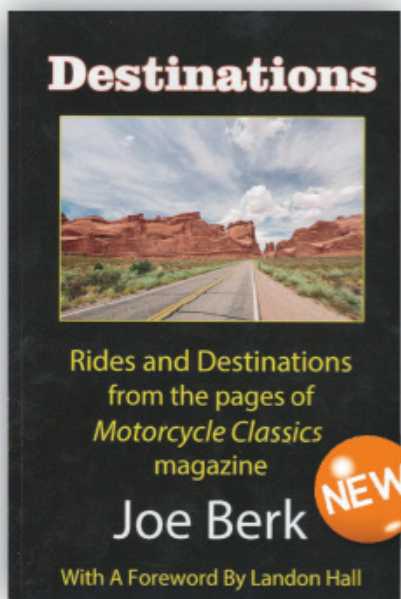
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Destinations is a collection of motorcycle rides and destinations culled from the pages of *Motorcycle Classics* magazine. Joe Berk is a regular contributor to *Motorcycle Classics*, and this book encompasses his travel stories going back as far as 2006: great motorcycle hangouts, mountain roads, national parks, best kept secrets, things to avoid, the best restaurants, and more for great rides in both the United States and parts of Baja. It's all here, inviting you to ride the best roads and the most exciting destinations in North America!

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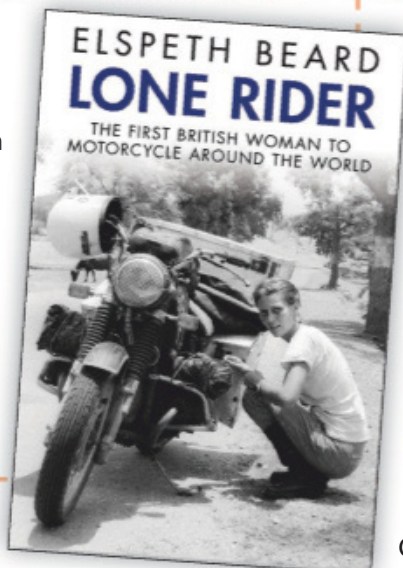


LONE RIDER

In 1982, at the age of 23, Elspeth Beard left her family and friends in London and set off on a 35,000-mile solo adventure around the world on her 1974 BMW R60/6. From riding through deserts and mountain ranges to faking documents and surviving crashes, Beard tells the whole story of her ride with honesty and wit. You don't want to miss this extraordinary and moving story of a unique and life-changing adventure.

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THE WOMEN'S GUIDE TO MOTORCYCLING

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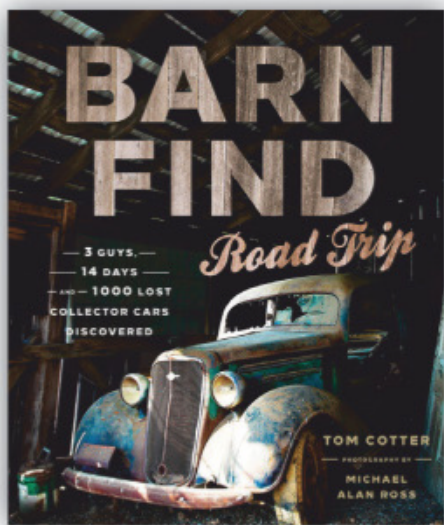
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CLASSIC MOTORCYCLES

Written by noted motorcycle author Patrick Hahn, *Classic Motorcycles* presents the history of motorcycling as told through the most significant, iconic, classic motorcycles of all time, with both period photography and modern portrait photography. You'll drool over the 1933 Matchless Silver Hawk, and you'll want to tear out the page displaying the 1956 Triumph Thunderbird and frame it. Prepare to be in awe of the undeniable classic motorcycles in this collection.

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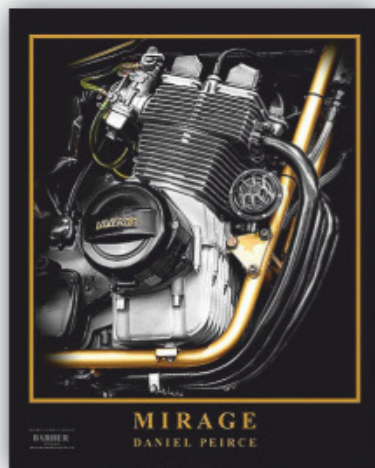
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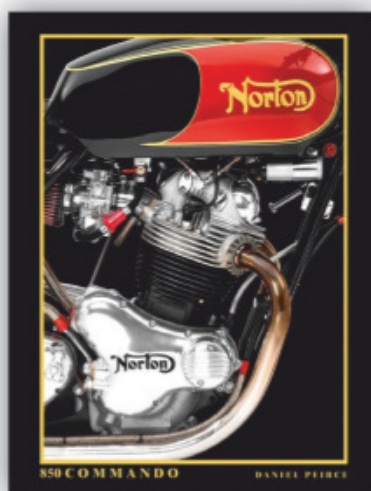
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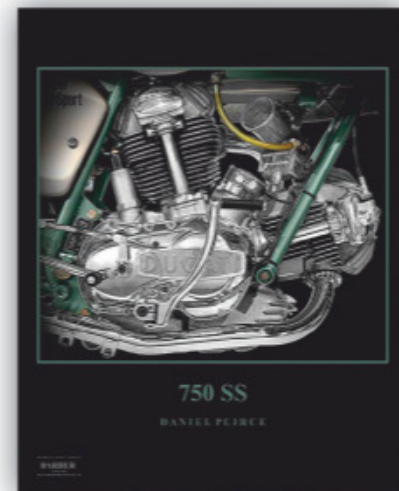
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PARTING SHOTS



All members of the Trailblazers Hall of Fame are invited for a group photo at the end of each banquet.

Seventy-five years is a rather long time. In the doggie world that's 525 years, and in real terms 75 years equates to three-quarters of a century.

Closer to home in the motorcycle community, 2019 marked the 75th annual banquet hosted by the Trailblazers, an organization formed in 1940 that pays homage to longtime and key members of the motorcycle sport. Today the Trailblazers is an affiliate of the Motorcycle Industry Council, the industry's major trade organization. Current Trailblazers president Don Emde explained the purpose behind the Trailblazers, "Our mission has been, and continues to be, to keep the sport of motorcycling alive by gathering annually to reconnect, remember and honor our fellow motorcycling friends and associates."

And so it was in 1940 that A.F. Van Order and a core of motorcycle racers within the Los Angeles, California, area gathered for a banquet. The group called themselves the Trailblazers, and table settings were for men only; no women allowed.

Beyond enjoying a good meal and camaraderie with fellow racers, the order of business at that first gathering included electing a club president. The honor fell to Paul "Dare Devil" Derkum, although Van Order remained the driving force for the annual banquets until his passing in 1954.

Eventually another motorcycle industry icon, Floyd Clymer, assumed the role of banquet organizer, and later club president, until he died in 1970. With Clymer's passing, the annual banquets fell into limbo until a few stalwarts stepped forward to revive the tradition. Max Bubeck and Earl and Lucile Flanders

set the table for future generations, and you can bet that it was Mrs. Flanders who made sure that the revived festive occasion included women!

During the past 40-something years the annual banquet has morphed into its own event, one that includes a pre-dinner vintage bike show (officially known as the Tom Cates Memorial Bike Show Presented by Hagerty), an annual wine toast to motorcycle legends that the sport lost during the previous 12 months, and commemorative awards including inductees into the Trailblazers Hall of Fame (for 2019, A.C. Bakken, Mark Blackwell, Ed Burke, John Penton and Rex Staten), The Earl & Lucile Flanders Award (Chris Agajanian, 2019), and the Trailblazers' most prestigious award, the Dick Hammer Award, presented this year to popular national and world champions Eddie Lawson and Wayne Rainey.



The Tom Cates Memorial Bike Show not only includes dozens of classic bikes, it's the perfect mixer that transforms into a classic bench racing session.

By now you might have figured that the math doesn't add up — it's been 79, not 75, years since the Trailblazers' first banquet. What gives?

Blame it on two factors: The war years prompted suspension of some early-year banquets and Clymer's passing forced another brief hiatus. This year's 75th celebration resulted in the banquet's largest number of attendees, more than 800 people. *Motorcycle Classics* will help continue the celebration in upcoming issues with bike features of two award-winning entries from the Tom Cates Memorial Bike Show. Meanwhile, count on the Trailblazers to continue blazing new trails for future generations of motorcyclists to come.

— Dain Gingerelli

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